

**SOME TRANSLATION PROBLEMS IN THE PENTATEUCH OF THE  
*NGMAMI KLɔUKLɔU ɔ* (DANGME BIBLE)**

**BY**

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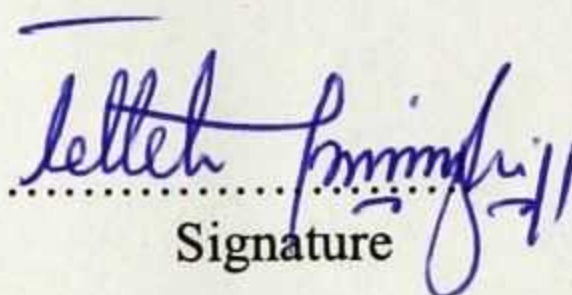
**OCTOBER, 2014**



## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research represents my own effort. No part or whole has been presented in any Institution for any award. Where references to other scholarly works have been cited or the view of others people borrowed, all have been duly acknowledged to the best of my knowledge.

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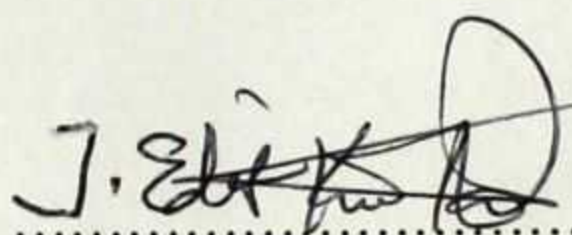
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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my Mother Mercy Ablavi Fiorgbor (nee Attipoe) and to the memory of my father Sampson Tettey Fiorgbor.

And

Rev. J.E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor for his endless effort in Dangme Mother-Tongue Biblical Scholarship



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*Afεε Mawu na yra mi*



## ABSTRACT

In 1999, the Dangme mother tongue Bible (*Ngmami Klɔklɔ ɔ*) was launched but it came with some translation challenges that affect reading and interpretation of some Pentateuchal texts. This thesis attempted to address some of the challenges confronting the Dangme reader when reading the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ ɔ*, in the face of culture, tradition, language and theology. The Methodology used for this research is Mother Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics. Five hundred and twenty-three persons responded to the questionnaire. Also twenty-seven Dangme scholars, theologians, translators and Bible readers were interviewed to generate primary data for the research. In addition, the researcher participated in study cells to sample opinions from the eight Dangme tribes. The following were some of the main findings of the thesis: *nyɛninyumu bi* suits the context of Genesis 12:5 instead of *wɔfase*; *Majeli kpa babauu* is more appropriate in the context of Exodus 12:38 than *futufutu nimli*; and *ngma* fits better the context of Leviticus 2:1 than *niye ni*, amongst others. It is being recommended that Bible translators should study, know, understand and apply the biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek) as source languages to their mother tongue translations. This will make the mother tongue translations of the Bible speak with clarity to its people.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

At the present time in world history, Christianity's demographic centre of gravity has shifted to the southern continent with Africa experiencing the most dynamic expression of the Christian faith.<sup>1</sup> This may be due to the massive Bible translation being done into the African languages, where Africans are constructing their own Christian theology with their mother-tongue Bibles. With the translation of the whole Bible into *Dangme*, the Dangme can now meaningfully dialogue with the Christian faith and construct their own Christian theology. Though, there are some translation problems with the Dangme Bible, it is much appreciated because it is very difficult if not impossible to have a perfect Bible translation. That is why Bible translations should be examined and reviewed to find out the degree of distortion and deletion. This chapter opens a general introduction to a research into the translation of some selected texts of the Torah or Pentateuch of the Dangme Bible. The Dangme translation of the Bible known as *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* (The Holy Writing).

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

*Dangme* has grown to meet its people as an instructional language, into which the Bible has been translated. *Dangme speaking* tribes inhabit the Eastern and Northern parts of the Accra plains, bounded by the River Volta. The Dangme tribes comprise Se, Kpom, Manya-Klo,

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<sup>1</sup> A. O. Mojola, 'Forward', in Ernest R. Wendland and Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole (eds.), *Biblical Texts and African Audiences*. Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2004, p. iv. See also Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West*: Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2003, p. 11; B.Y. Quarshie, 'Doing Biblical Studies in the African Context – the Challenge of Mother-Tongue Scriptures' in J.Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, (ed) *Christianity, Mission and Ecumenism in Ghana: Essays in Honor Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah*. Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009, p. 125; Kwame Bediako, 'Forward' in Azumah, John, *My Neighbour's Faith: Islam Explained for Christians*: Nairobi: WorldAlive Publishers, 2008, p. ix.



Yilo-Klo, Osudoku, Adaa, Gbugblaa and Nugo; anglicised as Shai, Kpone, Manya- Krobo, Yilo-Krobo, Osudoku, Ada, Prampram and Ningo respectively. The earliest attempt to reduce Dangme into written form was during the time orthography was developed for the Ga language in the nineteenth century and used to produce the Ga translation of the Bible (*Biblia* or *Nmālē Kronkron lē* by J. Zimmermann and the indigenous team in 1857). With the Ga orthography, a Basel missionary translated the Book of the Prophet Jonah into Dangme and K. Reindorf in 1857 wrote a two stanza Dangme hymn (Hymn number 343 of the Presbyterian Ga Hymn Book).<sup>2</sup> There were appreciable translation efforts from some individuals until the whole Bible was translated into Dangme and published in the year 1999. This translation came into existence as a response to the peoples' desire to hear God speak to them in their own mother tongue – Dangme. However it has come with some challenges and that is the reason for this research.

## 1.2 Statement of Problem

This research seeks to investigate some translation problems in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ (Dangme Bible). The translation work of the Bible into Dangme was completed in the year 1999. Though good effort went into its translation, yet there are some cultural, linguistic, hermeneutical and theological challenges which this thesis addresses. For example, in Genesis 12:5 the Dangme Bible renders Lot as Abram's *wɔfase*, a word that is foreign to Dangme. The translation of the Hebrew word יְהוָה YHWH and as *Yawɛ*, *Mawu* and *Yawɛ Mawu* and אֱלֹהִים *elohim*; as *mawu* and *mawuhi*, in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ also raises an issue that was investigated and found that the Dangme indigenous name of the Creator God.

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<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Ghana Languages, 'Preface' in *Dangme Ngmami Bɔ*. Accra: Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1990, p. v.



### 1.3 Research Question

A research of this nature must be based on an assumed hypothesis, which is a tentative explanation of a phenomenon, used as the basis for further investigation. The main question on which the research is based is:

What are some of the challenges confronting the Dangme reader when reading the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* ɔ, in the face of culture, tradition, language and theology?

Based on the main research question, these subordinate questions have been conceived:

- a. What are some of the problems that might be encountered when a biblical text is not well translated?
- b. Why should Bible translation be a hermeneutical enterprise that demands features of some accuracy, clarity and naturalness?
- c. What are the reading communities from the dialectal areas, preachers, theologians, and other biblical scholars saying about the translation challenges that affect reading and interpretation in the Pentateuch of the Dangme Bible?

### 1.4 Motivation for the Study

The research is motivated by the researcher's background in Old Testament and Biblical Hebrew and the interest of reading and hearing closely the voice of God in Hebrew and Dangme; and also from the perspective of worldview, culture and tradition. Again, the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* ɔ on which this thesis is based, has been used by the researcher for devotional and academic purposes. The challenges he encountered in the reading of the Dangme Bible are the focus of this research. Finally, in the Translators' note to the reader *Nya Tsɔɔmi*, in page *iii* of the Dangme Bible, the Translators appealed to readers to bring all translation imperfections to the notice of the Bible Society of Ghana and this research is in response to the call and these are the factors that necessitated this study.



### 1.5 Objective of the Study

The study analysed the following Dangme words and phrases; *wɔfase*, *futufutu nimli*, *niye ni*, *ohɛ*, *mimɛ* and *mawuhi* in the context in which they are translated in the following texts in the Pentateuch of the Dangme Bible.

- a. *Wɔfase* in Genesis 12:4-5
- b. *Futufutu nimli* in Exodus 12:38
- c. *Niye ni* in Leviticus 2:1
- d. *Tsopa kɛ he via* and *mimɛ* misrepresented in Numbers 5:15 and
- e. *Mawuhi* in Deuteronomy 4:28.

### 1.6 Significance of the Study

This research is a build-up on Kuwornu-Adjaottor's scholarly works.<sup>3</sup> He did similar study in the New Testament, on the interpretation of the following texts in Dangme Bible: Matthew 6:12, 1Timothy 3:2a, Mark 1:12 and Luke 24:25. Kuwornu-Adjaottor's findings in Dangme Biblical Hermeneutics were limited to the New Testament and therefore it is apposite that a similar study is carried out in the Old Testament.

It was found in this study that some of the challenges confronting the Dangme reader when reading the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ*, has to do with the traditional translation and interpretation of some texts in the Dangme Bible. The translation and interpretations of the following texts are the contributions this research has added to knowledge:

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<sup>3</sup>J.E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 'Mother Tongue Translations of the Bible, Resources for African Biblical Studies'. Unpublished Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies, (by Publication), with a specialization in African Biblical Studies, 2012; and 'Some Translation and Exegetical Problems in the Sɔmi He ɔ (New Testament) of the Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ (The Dangme Bible)'. Unpublished Thesis submitted to Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon for the Award of Master of theology, 2006.



1. Genesis 12:5, *Abram ngɔ e yo Sarai, kɛ Lot, e nyɛminyumu bi ɔ* [Abram took his wife Sarai, and Lot his brother's son...]
2. Exodus 12:38, *Majeli kpa babauu komɛ hu piɛ a he...* [A multitude of foreigners also joined them...]
3. Leviticus 2:1, *Ke nɔ ko ngɔ ngma kɛ ma bɔ sami ha Nyingo ɔ, e wɛɛ lɛ bukɔbukɔ kɛ pee mamu. E pue nɔ oliv nu kɛ ohɛ.* [When any person presents grain offering to the LORD, he or she should mill it into fine flour. He or she should pour olive oil and frankincense on it].
4. Numbers 5:15, *nyumu nɛ ɔ nɛ ngɔ e yo ɔ kɛ ba osɔfo ɔ ngɔ. Nyumu ɔ nɛ hɛɛ ngma mamu kilo kake, nɛ ji bɔ nɛ e maa sa ngɛ yo ɔ he ɔ kɛ ba. e ko plɛ oliv nu kɛ pue nɔ, nɛ e ko ngɔ ohɛ hu kɛ fɔ nɔ...* [The man should bring the wife before the priest. The man should bring along one kilogram of grain flour which is the required offering for the wife. He must not pour olive oil on it and he must put frankincense also on it].
5. Deuteronomy 4:28, *Nyɛ ma ya sɔmɔ wɔhi nɛ a kɛ nɔmlɔ adesa nine pee ngɛ leje ɔ, tsohi kɛ tɛhi nɛ hyɛ we nɔ, nɛ a nui nɔ, nɛ a yi nɔ, nɛ a nui nɔ he fu.* [there you will worship gods made by human hands, stones and trees that can neither see, hear, eat, nor smell]<sup>4</sup>.

## 1.7 Methodology

The Methodology used for this research is Functional Contextualism in Mother-Tongue<sup>5</sup> Biblical Hermeneutics. It borrows from the fields of Educational Technology and Biblical

<sup>4</sup>Both Dangme and English translations are products of the researcher's own effort.

<sup>5</sup>The mother tongue of a person is that person's native language, the language that one is born into, as it were, and grows up with. It is the person's first language as compared to other languages one might learn later in life, for example school. B. Y. Quarshie, 'Doing Biblical Studies in the African Context-The Challenge of Mother-Tongue Scriptures' in J.K. Asamoah-Gyadu (ed), *Christianity, Mission and Ecumenism in Ghana: Essays in Honor of Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah*. Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009, p. 116.



Studies, Bible Translation Studies and Language Studies – Biblical Languages: Ancient Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek, and Local African/Ghanaian Languages.

1. Identify a Biblical Text which you think has been wrongly translated into your mother-tongue.
2. Discuss why the translation is problematic in your culture.
3. State and explain the methodology you will use and the proponents.
4. Do a study (an exegesis) of the text, using Bible Study resources – Dictionaries, Commentaries, Encyclopaedias, Word Study helps etc.
5. Find out what scholars have said about the text, how they interpret it and reasons for their interpretations.
6. Discuss the usage of the concept in your language/culture/interview indigenous speakers of your mother-tongue for deeper insight into the concept you are researching. Use local terminologies in your writing and explain them in English.
7. Compare the text in your mother-tongue with other Ghanaian translations you can read and understand.
8. Analyze the mother tongue-translations; what do they mean? How are the meanings of the text similar to that of Hebrew/ Greek? How are they different? What might have accounted for the differences in translation?
9. Come out with a new translation of the text that fit your own culture.<sup>6</sup>

Functional contextualism is a concept that emerged in the field of Educational Technology and Research Development. Contextualism here means a worldview in which any event is interpreted as an ongoing act inseparable from its current and historical context and in which a radically functional approach to truth and meaning is adopted.<sup>7</sup> Mother-tongue theology<sup>8</sup> is

<sup>6</sup> J.E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 'Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics: A Current Trend in Biblical Studies in Ghana' *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)* 3(4): Scholarlink Research Institute Journals, 2012: 577.

<sup>7</sup> E. J. Fox, 'Constructing a Pragmatic Science of Learning and Instruction with Functional Contextualism' *Educational Technology Research and Development* Vol. 54. No1. February 2006: 8



a scholarly approach to biblical interpretation with and in a person's first language. This calls for the Bible to be translated into the mother-tongues so that people can hear God speaking to them in their own cultures and worldviews. The chosen methodology is appropriate to help convey the Word of God into the Dangme culture, in a functional context. Kuwornu-Adjaottor opines that, "God would have chosen Dangme if Jesus were [to be] born into Dangme cultures."<sup>9</sup> The fact that God has chosen Dangme means Christ is born into the Dangme cultures. So let the Dangme hear His voice.

This research is both qualitative and quantitative based, where primary and secondary documentary sources were consulted; and field research, where questionnaire were administered to sample opinions from the eight Dangme tribes and interviews were conducted together with study cells.

### 1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study is aimed at investigating some translation challenges that affect reading and interpretation in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* and covers Dangme-Christians in the whole of the eight Dangme tribes. Limitations include the following; firstly, constrain of distributing and retrieving questionnaire on the whole of Dangmeland and among all Christian groups. The second was interviewees' preparedness to willingly respond to the

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<sup>8</sup> Some prominent African Biblical Mother-Tongue Hermeneutical Scholars: J.S. Mbiti *Bible and Theology in African Christianity* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986); Kuwornu-Adjaottor, J.E.T. 'Patronage and Usage of the Mother-Tongue Bibles in Kumasi, Ghana'. *Prime Journal of Social Science (PJSS)*. Vol.2 (6) November 2012: 121-129; B.Y. Quarshie, 'The Bible in African Christianity: Kwame Bediako and the Reshaping of an African Heritage'. *Journal of African Christian Thought*. Vol. 14, No.2. Akropong: December, 2011; Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. New York: Orbis Books, 1995; Aloo Osotsi Mojola, 'The Challenge of Ngugi Wa Thiong' o to African Bible Translators and Biblical Scholars', in Ernest R. Wendland and Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole (eds.), *Biblical Texts and African Audiences*. Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2004; Mercy Amber Oduyoye; *Hearing and Knowing: Theological Reflections on Christianity in Africa*. Accra: Sam-Woode Ltd, 2000; J.S. Ukpong, 'Christology and Inculturation: A New Testament Perspective' in R. Gibellini (ed.) *Paths of African Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994; George Ossom-Batsa, 'African Interpretation of the Bible in Communicative Perspective' *Ghana Bulletin of Theology. New Series* Vol.2 July 2007.

<sup>9</sup> J.E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 'Patronage and Usage of the Mother-Tongue Bibles in Kumasi, Ghana'. *Prime Journal of Social Science (PJSS)*. Vol.2 (6) November 2012: 126.



questions and to divulge momentous information to aid the research. Thirdly, the dialectal challenge that the Dangme language posed to its readers also limited the thesis in a way.

### 1.9 Theological Relevance

The emergence of mother-tongue theology through Bible translation into African Christianity has really opened the mind-door of the African Christian to reflect on the word of God from the perspective of his or her language, thought pattern and worldview. This theology evolves as the African Christian Church teaches and lives her faith, and as a response to the extreme situations such as culture, tradition and worldview. Since the Bible is the fulcrum on which Christian theology revolves, the Bible must be read, understood, and interpreted as an ongoing act inseparable from its historical and current context. This requires the adoption of a radically functional approach to truth and meaning. When the Bible is made to function in this manner, it speaks to the culture and felt needs of its receptors.

The Dangme, like all Africans, already have their objects of worship and Christian theology must compete with Traditional African Religions (ATRs), the first choice of the peoples' religious belief since it is perfectly knit to their cultures. The language factor in worship is important because it makes worship meaningful to people. In ATRs, alters are serviced and incantations are chanted in languages understood by the priests, priestesses and mediators alone, excluding the worshippers. Worship must appeal to its adherents and address the language gaps, and that is why Christianity is doing well among other competitors because of the mother tongue Bibles.

Theologically, this research helps the Dangme to:

- Dialogue with the Bible to construct a meaningful relationship with *Nyingmo Mawu*, the God of the Dangme.



- Read, understand and interpret the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* meaningfully, to preach a sound doctrine and develop biblical teaching and learning materials in Dangme for the growth of the Christian Church in Dangmeland.

### 1.10 Literature Review

Many theologians of African descent have advanced the course of mother-tongue theology.<sup>10</sup> Scholarly literature, constructive debates and arguments have been tabled, and thought provoking speeches have been delivered at many world class conferences, on mother-tongue theology and the need to translate the Bible into every human language to bring the Christ-Event home to every human race. Some of these scholarly works on Bible translation and mother-tongue theology are reviewed as follows.

Asamoah-Gyadu argues that “if Christianity is doing well in Africa, I suggest in this essay, it is because African Christians do not compromise on the divinity of the Bible. All Christians regard the Bible as holy but for African Christians, this is paramount.”<sup>11</sup> The Bible is celebrated in the African communities for its divinity and as a symbol of divine presence. The Bible has served as the fundamental source of doing Christian theology and sound theology depends on sound interpretation of the Bible. Indeed theologising involves reading, reflecting and interpreting historical and contemporary experiences in the light of Scriptures. This assumption allows the Bible to have the final word on human behaviour in African Christianity. However, if ~~Scripture~~ is not well translated, read and interpreted in the context of African thought patterns, then it becomes an African judge who does not speak the whole

<sup>10</sup> This is a type of Christian theology that uses a person’s indigenous language, symbols and art to express thoughts, ideas and to establish a union with a Transcendental Being (in this case YHWH).

<sup>11</sup> J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, ‘Beyond Text and Interpretation: the Bible as a Book of Sacred Power in African Christianity’ *Journal of African Christian Thought*, Vol. 10, No. 2, December 2007: 18.



truth to the African. This is why the research takes the initiative to correct some translation challenges in the Pentateuch of the Dangme Bible.

David Dewey writes that, the Bible has one divine author but many human authors, who wrote in the languages they knew: Greek for the New Testament and Hebrew (with a smattering Aramaic) for the Old Testament. And unless you are prepared to learn these languages, you must use a translation to access the Word of God.<sup>12</sup> Dewey gave two ways by which a person can access the Word of God. He underscores the fact that one must learn the original biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek) in order to appreciate the Holy Scriptures. But Christian theology rejects the notion of meeting God in a sacred or heavenly tongue. This means that Dewey's second option of accessing the word of God in its translated form becomes an ideal alternative for Christian worship. Dewey's work will give this research the bases to ascertain if the Dangme translation of the Pentateuch is indeed what God said to the ancient Israel in the Hebrew language.

The Basel missionaries' work in Ghana charted a path that reduced some Ghanaian languages into writing. This act was not done out of interest, but a missionary strategy that was employed from the mission home offices. Smith notes that 'the Basel Committee insisted that, at all cost, the African was to hear the Gospel, to read the Bible and worship and be taught in his [or her] own tongue.'<sup>13</sup> In this respect, Johannes Zimmermann and Johann Gottlieb Christaller did ~~very well~~ by translating the whole Bible together with indigenous teams into Ga (1866) and Akuapem Twi (1871) respectively. The challenges they faced were enormous; firstly they were secondary learners of both the source languages (Hebrew and

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<sup>12</sup> D. Dewey, *A User's Guide to Bible-Translations: Making the Most of Different Versions*, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> N. Smith, *The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1835-1960: A Younger Church in a Changing Society*. Accra: Ghana universities Press, p. 54



Greek) and receptor languages (the African languages into which they translated the Bibles). Secondly, they lacked the cultural basis of the people since they condemned African cultural values and tagged them as fetish. Though the missionaries' work laid the foundation for the Dangme Bible, it is appropriate to analyse the translation from the perspective of cultural values and traditions. Their weakness to see the Dangme culture as a medium to present the Christian message is of great concern, so that the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ* communicates to the Dangme, the wonders of God.

Hesselgrave and Romman mention that the goal of the Christian missionaries in communication has always been to present the supracultural message of the gospel in culturally relevant terms. They write: "there are two potential hazards which must be assiduously avoided in this endeavour, (1) the perception of the communicator's own cultural heritage as an integral element of the gospel, and (2) a syncretistic inclusion of elements from the receptor culture which would alter or eliminate aspects of the message upon which the integrity of gospel depends."<sup>14</sup> Hesselgrave and Romman are right in their assertions because the gospel message was translated for the African in at least three different cultures; the source culture (Hebrew and Hellenist), the mediating culture (Western missionary's culture) and the targeted culture (African). This tricultural heritage of Bible translations should be reviewed by African translators as a methodology that produces newer versions of mother-tongue Bibles that speak to the African as African. It is factual that some African Bible translators are applying this tricultural approach to modern translations. This research is as a response to some of these translation challenges in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ*.

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<sup>14</sup> D. J. Hesselgrave and Edward Romman, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990, p. 1.



The most extensive work in the area of scholarship on the Dangme Bible is, the works of Kuwornu-Adjaottor, in which he lays bare some cultural and linguistic challenges in the translation of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ ɔ, Somi He ɔ* (New Testament of the Dangme Bible). He proved that to the Dangme, sins are forgiven and not loaned as rendered by the translators of Matthew 6:12. Again he corrected the impression created by the Dangme translators of Ephesians 5:22-23 that husbands have absolute power over their wives, and many others. These unfortunate translations and exegetical problems, pose adverse challenges to readers and receptors. As much as the effort of Kuwornu-Adjaottor is commended, his work is limited to the *Somi He ɔ* (New Testament). This calls for similar work to be carried out in the *Somi Momo ɔ* (Old Testament). He is right when he mentions that “in recent years, the profile of translation effort in Africa/Ghana has begun to change from major emphasis on the New Testament, than on the Old Testament (to get the complete Bibles for language groups).....”<sup>15</sup> Here he is seen as emphasising the need to do a sound translation work in the Old Testament. Quarshie also quotes Adamo as saying ‘many prospective African students deliberately refuse to do Old Testament research because of the language’s demand. They rather prefer church history, systematic theology or African indigenous religion (Adamo 1997).’<sup>16</sup> The above scholars are of the collective opinion that Old Testament scholars are becoming endangered in the spheres of theological scholarship, hence the importance of this research in Old Testament mother-tongue hermeneutics.

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<sup>15</sup> J.E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, *Some Translation and Exegetical Problems in the Somi He ɔ* (New Testament) of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ ɔ* (The Dangme Bible). Unpublished M.Th Thesis submitted to Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, 2006, p.7. See also Kuwornu-Adjaottor, J.E.T. *Mother Tongue Translations of the Bible, Resources for African Biblical Studies*. Unpublished Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies, (by Publication); with a specialization in African Biblical Studies, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> B.Y. Quarshie, ‘Doing Biblical Studies in the African context – The Challenge of Mother-Tongue Scriptures,’ in J.Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, (ed) *Christianity, Mission and Ecumenism in Ghana: Essays in Honor Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah*. Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009, p. 114.



In a related work, Kuwornu-Adjaottor made a survey to ascertain the patronage of the mother tongue Scriptures among Christian churches in the Kumasi Metropolis in Ghana. He writes, "The varied mother tongue translations of the Bible offers strong basis for theologizing in Ghana and Africa, because the enterprise of Scripture translation makes use of traditional religious categories and ideas."<sup>17</sup> With this argument, he advocates that mother tongue translations of the Bible are the appropriate means of transporting the Christ Event into cultures. Thus each and every language is capable of being used to communicate the message of the incarnation. Can effective theology be done outside the scope of the mother-tongue? This research tried to find an answer to this question using the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klauklau*.

Josee Ngalula's assertion of the mother tongue is very important to the ongoing dialogue. He put forward his opinion as follows: "it is through the mother tongue that the Gospel can shape people's personalities, thoughts and reactions."<sup>18</sup> The emphasis here is on the Mother tongue as the apposite medium to transmit the Gospel and claims that anything other than the mother tongue renders the Gospel superficial. Ngalula's opinion becomes a propeller that will shape the Church as each ethnic group therefore, however small, has a claim to hear the wonders and mighty acts of God and respond to them in the mother tongue. The Dangme mother tongue readers of the Bible need a clearer understanding of the Pentateuch as theological tool that shapes their personalities, thoughts and actions.

Lamin Sanneh, reflecting on the issue of Bible translation from a cultural perspective points out that; "[Bible] Translation would consequently help to bring us to new ways of viewing

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<sup>17</sup> J. E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, 'Patronage and Usage of the Mother-Tongue Bibles in Kumasi, Ghana'. *Prime Journal of Social Science (PJSS)*. Vol.2 (6) November 2012: 126.

<sup>18</sup> J. N.Tshianda, 'Quest for Theological Lexicons in African Languages' in Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole and Ernst R. Wendland (eds.) *Interacting with Scriptures in Africa*. Nairobi: Action Press, 2005, p. 40-41



the world, commencing a process of revitalization that reaches into both the personal and cultural spheres. This locates the message in the specific and particular encounter with cultural self-understanding, although it is important to stress that the encounter still leaves culture to God's law."<sup>19</sup> If African theology will be meaningful to the African, then the course of Bible translation should be widened to engulf all cultures and languages. It is harmless to envisage that Africa's success story in Christianity is wholly dependent on the mother-tongue translations of the Bible. It is worthy of note that when the Bible is translated into a mother-tongue, that version assumes an authority that speaks for and against the culture of that language; thereby purging the culture as it tries to reshape the thoughts and self-understanding of the indigenes with new cultural values and mores that are Christianised. Allegorically, Lamin said "when one translates, it is like pulling the trigger of a loaded gun: the translator cannot recall the hurtling bullet." The argument around this metaphor is that the hurtling bullet of Bible translation must hit the targeted audience without distortion. The researcher scans the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀ ɔ* to verify if the translation bullets have hit the targeted audience – the Dangme.

David Barrett indicates that it is impossible to overestimate the importance of the Bible in African society. However, the African has the notion that the Bible is synonymous to mission, since the missionary read and interpreted scripture in Western jacket. The point of divergence for the African, from theological slavery into theological emancipation was with the translation of the Bible into the mother tongue. He buttresses this by stressing the fact that "with the publication of African translations, a momentous change took place; it now became possible to differentiate between mission and scriptures. Through these scriptures the God, Africans perceived, was addressing them in the vernacular in which was enshrined the soul of

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<sup>19</sup> L. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995, p. 53.



their people.”<sup>20</sup> This implies that African mother tongues are capable of possessing transcendental variety. If one reads Isaiah 49:3a “And He said to me, you are my servant” in the mother-tongue for the very first time, would one say God is speaking directly to him or her without distortion? For instance, Isaiah 49:3a in Dangme reads “ *Nɛ E de mi ke, ‘ye tsolo ji mo...*” The mother-tongue is the blood that runs through the veins of African Christian theology, which will be anaemic and possibly die if the Mother-Tongue is neglected. This study examines how some texts are translated in the Dangme and finds out whether they agree with the language and thought patterns of the Dangme.

John Mbiti says that, “it is no wonder that the publication of these Bible translations [mother tongue translations] is received with enormous joy by both readers and listeners alike, and immediately becomes a crucial landmark in the history of the church in any particular language area. Nothing is more decisive as a watershed than publication of the scriptures in a local language following the first introduction of the Christian message.”<sup>21</sup> He recounts his personal encounter with the first translation of the New Testament into his mother tongue and how his family held the document in very high esteem long before the whole Bible was translated in 1956. Mbiti has thus made a point that when the Bible is translated into a peoples’ language, it becomes the peoples’ Bible and they are identified with it. That is why the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* is paramount to the Dangme since it bears both tribal divine marks of the Dangme; that is why it must be read and interpreted in their cultural values, worldview and thought patterns.

Kwame Bediako sees the mother tongue as an important biblical and theological authority that communicates the wonders of God to people. He argues that “language itself become,

<sup>20</sup> D. B. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 127.

<sup>21</sup> J. Mbiti, *The Bible and Theology in African Christianity*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 24.



then, not merely a social or psychological phenomenon, but a theological one as well ... for each person, through their mother tongue, that the Spirit of God speaks to convey divine communication at its deepest to the human community."<sup>22</sup> Bediako sees language as a divine theological tool that is able to put humanity and divinity into a communicative relationship hence the mother tongue Bibles are divine means by which indigenous people do not just hear God speak but also make a response to God. Elsewhere, he writes that, in Christianity, the perception of the word of God is achieved in our own Mother-Tongues.<sup>23</sup> No stride can be made in Christianity if the Mother-Tongue is relegated to the background and translation is done outside the cultural parenthesis of the receptors. The most integral part of Bediako's ideologies is that theology would be meaningful if constructed at the grassroot where the African composes theological thoughts culturally.

In his work, *On Their Way Rejoicing*, Ype Schaaf, opines that, "The translation of the Bible into *Afrikaans*<sup>24</sup> was of great importance for the emancipation of the *Boers*,<sup>25</sup> while the Bible in African languages taught the Bantu and the coloured peoples to link salvation and liberation and deliverance from need with an exodus from oppression."<sup>26</sup> He explains that when the Bible is translated into a culture, it submerged and kills negative political and ideologies, bringing emancipation. This is the story of South Africa and apartheid. He expresses the fact that even though the Bible has been in Africa before the birth of Christianity, but it was at the time of the Bible's reintroduction to Africa, that it affected every sphere of the African. As the Bible is shaping Africa, the Dangme must also be affected with the study of the Pentateuchal message to the Dangme.

<sup>22</sup> K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. Mayknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> K. Badiako, *Jesus in Africa: The Christian Gospel in African History and Experience*. Akropong-Akuapem: Regum Africa, 2000, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> Afrikaans – a language that has developed from Dutch and spoken in South Africa.

<sup>25</sup> Boers – these are South African whose family originated from the Netherlands.

<sup>26</sup> Y. Schaaf, *On Their Way Rejoicing: The History and Role of the Bible in Africa*. Akropong-Akuapem: Regum Africa, 2002, p. 198



Ekem in his opinion claims that Mother-Tongue biblical hermeneutics is able to shape African communities. He therefore calls for study Bibles and Bible commentaries to be developed in the mother tongues. He says “with particular reference to African communities, it is vital to provide Study Bibles and commentaries that clearly articulate theological, linguistic and anthropological issues in the people’s own local languages.”<sup>27</sup> What Ekem meant here is that doing Mother-Tongue biblical hermeneutics will shape the future of African biblical theology. Ekem’s opinion is a wake-up call to biblical scholars of Dangme descent to do exegesis on the biblical texts and develop biblical study materials such as commentaries and study Bible that will help them to construct their own Christian theology that will be meaningful to their cultural setting. This is the course of this study in the first five books of the *Ngmami Klauklau*.

Ekem in another work evaluates the contribution of vernacular Bibles to the development of the Church. He underscores the fact that Bible translation is an important evangelism strategy involving the acquisition and use of effective linguistic tools such as carefully thought out rules on grammar and orthography. Ekem quotes an extract from a report written in 1912 by Rev. J.H. Ritson<sup>28</sup>

No Church with a vernacular Bible has ever been known to perish, and no Church without one has ever been known to survive through storms of persecution and under stress of temptation. The Bible is only unerring missionary... A good translation preaches in forceful and familiar idiom the whole truth in perfect balance” (Ritson 1911-12: 186-191).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> J. D.K. Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A study of Priesthood in Some Christian and Primal Communities of Ghana and its Relevance for Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretation*. Accra: SonLife Press, 2008, p.188.

<sup>28</sup> Rev. J.H. Ritson was Executive Secretary of the British and Foreign Society (BFBS).

<sup>29</sup> J. D. K. Ekem, ‘Weslean Methodism and Bible Translation in the Gold Coast,’ in J.Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, *Christianity, Mission and Ecumenism in Ghana: Essays in Honor Robert K. Aboagye-Mensah*. Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2009, p. 82



Thus the existence of mother tongue translations of the Bible do not only facilitate access to the particular communities speaking those languages, but also creates the likelihood that the hearers of the word in their own languages will make their own responses to it and on their own term.<sup>30</sup> This buttress the fact that mother tongue Bibles are great resources for the growth and advancement of African Christianity. In similar manner the research into the Dangme translation of the Pentateuch will be an effective evangelism strategy for the Church in Dangmeland.

Mojola writes that “the Bible in the vernacular empowered the African church to evangelize plant churches and open new frontiers independent of missionary control or foreign mission centres. There can be no doubt that the phenomenal growth of Christianity in Africa owes an enormous debt to Bible translation.”<sup>31</sup> Mojola’s point is that Bible translation into the Mother-Tongue is important to the growth of the African church. The clarion call on Christianity is that all should come to the saving grace of God through Christ and this can be done through hearing and interpreting the Good News in the Mother-Tongue. In the same work, he stresses, “thus it is virtually important that biblical exegesis be done in the languages in which the majority of believers interact with the word of God – their mother-tongue’. The truth is, people think and expresses themselves in the language of their being (the mother-tongue) and any translation imperfection in the word of God will render a distortion of the original message. Since the baton of Bible translation has been handed from the missionary translators to the mother-tongue translators, it calls on the mother-tongue translators to do a genuine work that will be linguistically and culturally appreciative.

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<sup>30</sup> K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. New York: Orbis Books, 1995, p. 62

<sup>31</sup> A. O. Mojola, ‘Bible Translation in Africa’ in Tokunboh Adeyemo (General ed.) *African Bible Commentary*. Nairobi: World Alive Publishers, 2006, p. 1315



Gerald West in his work, *African Biblical Hermeneutics and Bible Translation* argues that African biblical hermeneutics is prescriptive, that is in the process of being defined. He writes that, African biblical translation often operates as if it were not part of African biblical hermeneutics.<sup>32</sup> He says further that, what is called African Bible translation tends to be a hermeneutically unreflective practice and Bible translation seems reluctant to move from what the text might have meant to what the text might mean to Africa. This makes Bible interpretation in Africa not African enough, since it fails to engage with African realities as a subject for scholarship. He calls for the focus of African translators to shift their gaze. A means by which African biblical scholars and translators could respond to West is to approach Bible translation with functional contextualism – translate in functional contexts, hence Bible translation should be Mother-Tongue oriented. Functional contextualism in mother tongue biblical hermeneutics is the approach the researcher used in analysing some translation problems in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klauklau*.

Ossom-Batsa, claims that African biblical hermeneutics is inculturating the Bible in a dynamic dialogue with the multiplicity of cultures that characterise the African continent. He explains from a point made by B.S. Bevan, when he says that [the] process of relating the Gospel message to the people's life situation or living experience has been referred to in mission history as adaptation, or indigenization, or incarnation, inculturation, or *skenosis*, and recently as contextualization.<sup>33</sup> What Ossom-Batsa says is alerting African translators that translation cannot be done in a vacuum; rather it must be done in a context of the recipients, taking cognisance of the totality of the recipients' being. Ossom-Batsa is careful to say that "too much stress on context and culture runs the risk of generating a 'pseudo-biblical

<sup>32</sup> G. West, 'African Biblical Hermeneutics and Bible Translation' in Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole and Ernst R. Wendland (eds.) *Interacting with Scriptures in Africa* (Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2005), 17.

<sup>33</sup> G. Ossom-Batsa, 'African Interpretation of the Bible in Communicative Perspective' *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*. New Series Vol. 2. July 2007, p. 92.



theology' not concretely founded on Scriptures."<sup>34</sup> He suggests a pragmatic horizon in which African biblical interpretation will bring to the fore, adherence to the biblical text, attention to the actions suggested in the biblical text and the context of the interpreter. Ossom-Batsa's pragmatic horizon which places African biblical hermeneutics into a dynamic dialogue with cultures is an alternative approach to this work. This is because the Dangme culture in which this research is situated is a multidimensional one, involving eight sub-tribes and this work must bring all these to a point of convergence.

Emmanuel Asante discusses exegetical methodologies that have been applied in Old Testament studies from earlier times before rationalism was brought to bear on biblical interpretation to present scholarship. He surveys Jewish scholars and the early rabbinic schools approach to biblical interpretation. He quotes R.K. Harrison who mentions that 'medieval Jewish exegetes developed a fourfold theory of interpretation'; the *Peshat*, *Derash*, *Remes* and *Sod*<sup>35</sup> and the seven rules governing *Peshat* developed by the Hillel School as presented by Walter Kaiser Jr. Asante reviewed many other scholarly approaches to biblical interpretation and writes that, "the various approaches serve as principles of [biblical] interpretation which can be followed in different historical, social and cultural contexts. It should be possible for Africans to come up with methodologies for the study of Scriptures which will reflect African ethos."<sup>36</sup> Asante is saying here that Scripture interpretation, translation and exegesis have no single methodology. Therefore Africans should make use of methodologies that appreciate African cultural values, idioms and symbols and this is the focus of this research.

<sup>34</sup> G. Ossom-Batsa, *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*. p. 99

<sup>35</sup> He explains *Peshat* as plain, simple or literal meaning, and *Derash* and the *Remes*, an allegorical significance of a text, and *Sod*, a secret or mystical meaning of the text.

<sup>36</sup> E. Asante, *Topics in Old Testament Studies*. Accra: SonLife Press, 2005, p. 63.



In his work, 'Traditions of Translation: A Pan-African Overview', Noss surveys Bible translation historically from the post-exilic periods (Nehemiah 8:1-12) to contemporary issues in translation through to the future of Bible translation in Africa. "In recent years, the profile of the [Bible] translation effort in Africa has begun to change. From the major emphasis on the New Testament, there is more and more emphasis on the Old Testament as the churches grow and become older."<sup>37</sup> The bothering question is; why should there be emphasis on the Old Testament now? Why the earlier neglect? It may be because the missionaries who re-introduced the Bible to Africa have noted that, Jewish cultural values and traditional practices in which the Old Testament is presented, are very similar to Africa's own story, hence they may seem as endorsing African's 'heathen' cultures. Nevertheless, many African communities through Bible translation have become part of worshippers who have heard God addressing them in their own mother tongues and cultural settings. Yet translation challenges remains to be fulfilled, that all Africa may hear the wonders of God in Christ in their own mother tongues and traditional cultural practices. There are many pointers to the Christ Event in the Dangme cultures and the research places them in a functional context in the exegeses of some selected texts in the Pentateuch of the Dangme Bible.

Hermanson made a pragmatic review of the translation of the names of God in the Zulu language and its implication for Bible translation. He writes, "too often, the local terminology for god, whether general or specific, has been rejected as not being appropriate to describe the God of the Bible. The fear has been that the cultural and socio-religious implications contained in such terms will not only detract from the revelation of the nature of God, but in fact make such revelation impossible."<sup>38</sup> This challenge is not only unique to the Zulu Bible,

<sup>37</sup> P. A. Noss, 'Traditions of Translation: A Pan-African Overview' in Gosnell L.O.R. Yorke and Peter M. Renju (eds.) *Bible Translation and African Languages*. Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2004, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup> E. A. Hermanson, 'Missionary Translation of the Bible into the Zulu Language' in Gosnell L.O.R. Yorke and Peter M. Renju (eds.) *Bible Translation and African Languages*. Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2004, p. 41



but most Ghanaian mother tongues too. For instance the Hebrew word יהוה has been translated *Yawε Mawu* in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ⚭ (Dangme Bible), *Yehowa* in the *Ɔɔkɔkɔ La* (Ewe Bible) *Iehowa* in the *Nymale Krakronɔ le* (Ga Bible) etc. The bothering question is, can't *Nyingmo*, *Mawu*, and *Nyɔmɔɔ* be used respectively for the translation of יהוה? Or the Dangme, Ga and Ewe may adopt *Mawu* as equivalent translation of יהוה because *Mawu* is common to the three languages.

Loba-Mkole on his part, traces Bible translation from a historical and theoretical perspective in Africa. He discusses some approaches to translation such as the functional equivalence, relevance, literary-functional equivalence and intercultural mediation. There is the call on African theologians to develop more translation approaches to aid biblical translation. "Nevertheless, Africa still needs to invest and make a bigger contribution towards the development of appropriate translation theories that can be used by Bible translation teams and that can also be discussed in theological institutions."<sup>39</sup> It is important to note how much Christianity owes to Bible translation especially in the case of Africa, but this can only happen when the biblical translation enterprises present their case with meaningful translations rather than literary translations. Loba-Mkole is calling on African translators to advance translation theories, but if Africa takes to the development of translation theories and these theories are not being applied to Bible translations and interpretation, then it is as good as they are not developed at all. The call should rather be on Bible translation and interpretation into African mother tongues, since theories developed in other academic fields could be applied to Bible translation. The research has made use of functional contextualism as a methodological approach adopted from other academic fields, to solve some translation problems in the Pentateuch of the Dangme Bible.

<sup>39</sup> J. C. Loba-Mkole. 'History and Theory of Scripture Translations' *Hervomde Teologiese Studies* Vol.64 No 1, (Jan./Mar.) 2008: 9-22



As Aloo Osotsi Mojola criticises Ngugi Wa Thiong' o' s break from English language to *Gyikuyu*, he raised some thought provoking questions that perennially confronts and preoccupies the minds of translators about the work of Bible translation and the amalgamation of cultures. "Can any two distinct socio-cultural and linguistic traditions be completely commensurable? Is it possible to completely understand or represent one culture and language fully in terms of another - without a certain amount of distortion, incompleteness, betrayal, unnaturalness etc?"<sup>40</sup> It could be debated here that translation is not about perfectness, but rather appropriateness that speaks to the culture and worldview of the receptor. This is the concern of this thesis.

### 1.11 Outline of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the General introduction. It contains the background of the study, statement of problem, research question; motivation for the study and objective of the study; and continues with significance of the study, a methodology, and limitation of the study; theological relevance; literature review and an outline of the study. Chapter two discusses the background and message of the Pentateuch, and exegesis of some selected texts from the Pentateuch. Chapter three centres on Dangme as a people and the development of the Dangme language into an instructional language, into which the Bible has been translated. Chapter four focuses on data interpretation, analysis and discussion of field results and Dangme commentaries on the selected texts. Chapter five concludes the thesis. It gives a summary of findings, issues emerging out of the research, recommendation and conclusion.

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<sup>40</sup> A. O. Mojola, 'The Challenge of Ngugi Wa Thiong' o to African Bible Translators and Biblical Scholars', in Ernest R. Wendland and Jean-Claude Loba-Mkole (eds.), *Biblical Texts and African Audiences*. Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2004, p. 5



## 1.12 Conclusion

This introductory chapter presented the general overview of the thesis 'Some Translation Problems in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klauklau* 3 (The Dangme Bible). The attempt has been made to justify the need to correct some translation challenges in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klauklau* 3. Some related literature on the topic have been reviewed. The next chapter considers background and message of the Pentateuch and exegesis of selected texts in the *Ngmami Klauklau* 3.



## CHAPTER TWO

### BACKGROUND AND MESSAGE OF THE PENTATEUCH AND EXEGESES OF SELECTED BIBLICAL TEXTS

#### 2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter of the thesis being the introductory chapter, focused on the need to correct some cultural, linguistic, hermeneutical, theological and translation challenges in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klauklau* ௩. These challenges affect reading and interpretation of the Dangme Bible to the Dangme people.

This present chapter discusses the background and message of the Pentateuch, as well as the exegesis of the selected Pentateuchal texts:

1. Genesis 12: 4-5 in the Dangme Bible which translates בֶּן-אֲחִיו ( *ben-'ahiw*) as *wɔfase*.
2. Exodus 12:38 which translates עֶרֶב ( *'ereb*) as *futufutu nimli*.
3. Leviticus 2:1 which renders מִנְחָה ( *minha<sup>h</sup>*) as *niye ni*.
4. Numbers 5:15 which renders לִבְנָה ( *lebonah*) as *mimɛ* and in all other texts in the Pentateuch and elsewhere it has been translated as *tsopa kɛ he via*.
5. Deuteronomy 4:28 which renders אֱלֹהִים *elohim* as *mawu* (singular) and *mawuhi* (plural). The name of God which has been used in the Dangme Bible is also an issue that bothers this study; *Mawu*, *mawu* and *mawuhi* are the names used for the אֱלֹהִים *elohim*. Therefore attempt would be made to trace the aboriginal name of God in the Dangme language.



## 2.1 Background to the Pentateuch

This research is situated in the context of the Pentateuch hence it is relevant to look at the Pentateuch as a complex-whole in order to understand the topic under discussion. The Pentateuch was originally one continuous book, but was divided into sections for convenience.<sup>41</sup> The Pentateuch etymologically comes from two Greek words *pente* (five) and *teucos* which originally meant vessel or roll, instruments. Its meaning changed in Alexandrian Greek to books – hence *pentateucos* now means ‘the book of five volumes.’<sup>42</sup> These five books are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These divisions were probably made by Greek translators, for it was in Alexandria that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scripture, was made. In Alexandria, Philo and others had tried to build bridges between the Book [Bible] and Hellenistic thought.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the titles of these books are not of Hebrew but Greek origin. The Hebrew names are merely taken from the first words of each book, and in the first instance only designated particular sections and not the whole book; that is בְּרֵאשִׁית (*b<sup>e</sup>re’shit*); וַאֲלֵה שְׁמוֹת (*w<sup>e</sup>’elleh sh<sup>e</sup>mot*); וַיִּקְרָא (*wayyiqra’*) בְּמִדְבָּר (*b<sup>e</sup>midbar*) and אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים (*’elle<sup>h</sup> haddebarim*).<sup>44</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, these books are collectively called, *the Torah*, a word that expresses the idea of instruction but have come to mean law. In Asante’s opinion, the Torah here, is the ‘law codes, embodying the rules governing the social and religious life of the people, were enlarged by the inclusion of the creation narratives, the legends of the patriarchs in general, the narratives of the early history and origin of the people.’<sup>45</sup> The Pentateuch narrates the creation and history of the primitive world and especially the early history of the nation of Israel and concludes with Moses’ last discourses and his death.

<sup>41</sup> D. Fleming, *Bridgeway Bible Dictionary*. Brisbane: Bridgeway Publications, 2004, p. 331.

<sup>42</sup> F. and M. Peloubet, (eds.) *Smith’s Handy-Reference Dictionary*. Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2008, p. 513.

<sup>43</sup> Y. Schaaf, *On Their Way Rejoicing: The History and Role of the Bible in Africa*, Akropong-Akuapem: Regnum Africa, 2002, p.10.

<sup>44</sup> J. P. Green, Sr. (General Ed. And Translator), *The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English 1 Vol. Edition* United States of America: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008.

<sup>45</sup> E. Asante, *Topics in Old Testament Studies*, Accra: SonLife Press, 2005, p. 4.



## 2.2 Theological Coherence of the Pentateuch

The interwoven themes attest to the book [Pentateuch] being a coherent piece of work written at a particular time. The literary structure is unified and homogeneous.<sup>46</sup> The Pentateuch is not a disorganized compilation of manuscript but a theological unit in a complex-whole such that it falls into two sections of unequal status. The first being the primeval history recorded in Genesis 1-11.<sup>47</sup> This part is universal and contains the creation of the world and the three significant crises – the fall of humanity, the flood, and the scattering at Babel.<sup>48</sup> YHWH responded to these crises with the Noahic or Noachian covenant with all living things and moved humanity to action to fulfil the purpose of creation by scattering humanity to cover the surface of the earth in order to fulfil the command, ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth’(Genesis 9:1).

The second part is Genesis 12 to Deuteronomy 34. This part starts with the call of Abram and the establishment of his family; through the miraculous birth of Isaac and Isaac’s children, Esau (Edom) and Jacob (Israel). Israel had twelve sons and a daughter who became the stock of the Israel Nation; thus the Pentateuch narrates a story from universality to particularity. It could be observed that *El-Shadai* went into a suzerainty-vassal covenant with Abram in Genesis chapters 15 and 17. It continues with the settlement of Israel in Goshen, Egypt, and the redemption of Israel, the seed of Abraham, out of slavery and the formation of Israel into an elected nation with a constitution. This constitution contains morality, social justice and cultic judgement. The Pentateuch continues with the establishment of Israel’s culture by a manual of ordinances to help with their needs as they approach YHWH who is to dwell

<sup>46</sup> J. C. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus*. England: Evangelical Press, 2000, p. 24.

<sup>47</sup> O. Adutwum, ‘Discipline in the Old Testament: The Perspective of the Primeval History, Genesis 1-11’ *Ghana Bulletin of Theology*, New Series, Volume 2, July 2007: 80-90. See also E. Asante, *Topics in Old Testament Studies*, Accra: SonLife Press, 2005, p. 109-144.

<sup>48</sup> The crisis mentioned here is what Walter C. Kaiser Jr. explained as the threefold plight of man(humanity) as a result of the Fall, the Flood, and the founding of Babel to the universality of God’s new provision of salvation to all men (humanity) through Abraham’s seed. W. C. Kaiser Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991, p. 43.



amidst them hence the demand to be holy. YHWH orders Israel's walk with military orders, census of the tribes, but Israel disregarded the orders. The concluding part of the Pentateuch narrative deals with the reconstitution of the nation under YHWH to enter into the promise land through a covenant renewal, through a prophetic and legal form under Joshua. Knight, in an attempt to put the Pentateuch into themes, rather explains Martin Noth's classification of the Pentateuch into five themes. He writes; North identified five central themes that served as crystallization points for much that is in the Pentateuch: promise of the patriarchs, Guidance out of Egypt, Guidance in the wilderness, Revelation at Sinai and Guidance into the Arable Land.<sup>49</sup> It is possible that each of these themes may be established on some kernel of Israel's historical evidence and experience. It is evident "that the Pentateuch is a well constructed work, which indicates that it is the work of an author, not the end product of haphazard growth like the Midrash."<sup>50,51</sup> We may not know who wrote the Pentateuch; yet it "is a coherent, unified literary piece."<sup>52</sup> The fact remains that the Pentateuch breathes coherence in its text and in its theological content. Its theology is highly relevant to Africa today.<sup>53</sup>

### 2.3 The Pentateuchal Authorship

The Pentateuch has so often served as the subject matter for innovative criticism throughout the history of biblical scholarship and that this literature is of crucial importance for our study

<sup>49</sup> D. A. Knight, 'The Pentateuch' in Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker (eds.) *The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985, p. 267.

<sup>50</sup> Midrash though difficult to define, at least it means the function of an ancient or canonical tradition in the ongoing life of a community which preserves those traditions and in some sense, finds its identity in them. See J. A. Sanders, *Torah Canon*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985, p. xiv

<sup>51</sup> G. J. Wenham, 'Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm' in David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (eds.) *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*. Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004, p. 132.

<sup>52</sup> John C. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus*. England: Evangelical Press, 2000, p. 22.

<sup>53</sup> A. Ndjereau, 'Introduction to the Pentateuch' in Tokunboh Adeyemo (Gen. ed.) *Africa Bible Commentary*. Nairobi: World Alive Publishers, 2006, p. 7.



of Israel's cultural history.<sup>54</sup> The question is, where does the Pentateuch come from? In an attempt to provide a tentative response to the above question, biblical scholars before the 19<sup>th</sup> Century generally ascribe the human authorship of the Pentateuch to Moses and several biblical texts in the Pentateuch affirmed this opinion<sup>55</sup> (Exodus 34:27; Numbers 33:1-2; Deuteronomy 31:9). Other Old Testament writers and New Testament writers and Jesus the Christ himself spoke of the Pentateuch as *Torath Mosheh* (the Law of Moses). Though many modern biblical scholars doubt the possibility of Mosaic authorship for most of the book, there is little evidence within the book itself to warrant such scepticism.<sup>56</sup> In accepting the common designation, 19<sup>th</sup> century scholars raised *Criticisms*<sup>57</sup> about the authenticity of Moses' authorship. Recent theological propositions reveal that the Pentateuch is an anonymous work, though oral tradition and earlier biblical scholars maintain Moses as its human author. Advanced theological and biblical arguments proved that the Pentateuch, though part is 'saturated with Egyptian religious and cultural background and only an author

<sup>54</sup> D. A. Knight, 'The Pentateuch' in Douglas A. Knight and Gene M. Tucker (eds.) *The Hebrew Bible and its Modern Interpreters*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985, p. 264.

<sup>55</sup> W. A. Elwell, (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006, p. 153.

<sup>56</sup> J. H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992, p. 23.

<sup>57</sup> Biblical theology need to concern itself with understanding Christian principles and ideas in a way that conforms to the tenets of the discipline. In order to achieve this, Pentateuchal criticism became very necessary. Textual, grammatical, literary and historical criticism all became important aids to establishing the proper significance of biblical theology; and the comparative method became an indispensable means of determining how concepts and ideas were understood at a particular time. Scholarship over two and half centuries developed four main methods of research into Pentateuchal studies. These are: source criticism, form criticism tradition-historical criticism and literary criticism. This section takes a fleeting look at these criticisms. Source criticism was the first to be employed and seeks to reveal the literary sources which might have been used in the composition of the books of the Pentateuch, from Genesis to Deuteronomy. Source criticism though now on relegation, still has considerable influence with respect to exegesis of Pentateuchal books and reconstruction of the history of ancient Israel. Form criticism on the other hand, sought to analyse the Pentateuchal materials into different categories on the assumption that each had its own particular life setting known as *Sitz im Leben* (T. D. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promise Land*, Grand Rapids: Paternoster Press and Baker Academic, 2002, p. 4-6). Form criticism identifies the form of a particular text to recover the historical context in which that material was composed. James Sanders explain that form criticism was a special type of investigation of the appearance of certain crucial traditions (J. A. Sanders, *Torah Canon*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985, p. xii). For instance Genesis was believed to consist of numerous episodes that circulated originally as both oral and independent of each other. The next is Tradition-historical Criticism which describes the process of leading up to the formation of the longer written source-document. The method was interested in the 'history of the traditions' underlying the Pentateuch, hence its name. Lately the Pentateuch is verified through the lens of Literary Criticism, which seeks to understand the Pentateuch as a coherent, unified work composed at one specific point in time. This paradigm recognises that the Pentateuch cannot be understood solely on the basis of the components that have been used in its construction; the whole is much greater than the sum of its parts (T. D. Alexander, p. 5).



well versed in Egyptian tradition could have composed this poignant piece that reeks of Egypt.<sup>58</sup>

The Bible averred that YHWH God of Israel ordered Moses to write up historical facts, (Exodus 17:14; Numbers 33:1-2); laws (Exodus 24:4, 7; 34:27ff) and poem (Deuteronomy 31:9, 22) for the Israelites. Moses' human authorship is affirmed by the Old Testament writers like Ezra, Daniel, Joshua, Malachi and Jesus Christ The New Testament authors and the Church Fathers unanimously support the Mosaic claim to the authorship of the Pentateuch. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch<sup>59</sup> may be due to the fact that Moses

<sup>58</sup> J. D. Currid, 'The Egyptian Setting of the Serpent Confrontation in Exodus 7, 8-13', *BZ* 39. 2, 1995, p. 224

<sup>59</sup> Judeo-Christian scholarship before the Age of Reason or 'Enlightenment' accepted the divine origin and Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. This traditional understanding was questioned during the Enlightenment of Western Civilization which spanned an era of critical scientific study of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures and this resulted in several hypotheses to Pentateuchal composition. One Author Hypothesis: the one-author theory acknowledges that Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch apart from the account of his own death in Deuteronomy 34. One Author-Latter Editor(s) Hypothesis: this theory attempts to address the objections to Mosaic authorship raised by the Multiple-Author Hypothesis. Generally this theory acknowledges Moses: (a) As the compiler of previously existing written sources into what we now have as Genesis; and (b) The author of the bulk of the other four books of the Pentateuch. According to this view, although editorial insertions in the Pentateuch are obvious, the amount of editorial activity was minimal and the Pentateuch may have been completed in its present form as early as the time of the Elders of Joshua's days (see Joshua 24:26) and not later than the time of Samuel the judge of Israel (see 1 Samuel 10:25). Multiple Authors and Latter Editor(s) Hypothesis: this theory was a response to realistic scholarship of the enlightenment to the difficulties observed in the literature of the Pentateuch such as: (i) Two versions of the creation narrative. Gen. 1:1-2:1-4a and Gen. 2:4b-25. (ii) The two accounts of naming of Beersheba Gen. 21:31 and Gen. 26:33. (iii) Disagreement as to when the worship of YHWH began Gen. 4:26 and Exodus 6:2-3. These questions along with differences in literary style and vocabulary gave rise to 'Source-Analysis' of the Pentateuch. Jean Asruc, the French physician initiated Source-Analysis of the Old Testament and his commentary on Genesis published in 1753, made the accession based on the use of divine names of God as Moses used two parallel sources in compiling the book of Genesis as: (a) Yahwist's Narratives (J) and (b) Elohimist's Narratives (E). Later two other sources detected in the Pentateuch are: (i) The Deuteronomistic source (D) largely the book of Deuteronomy. The Priestly source (P) that is legal and ceremonial text of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. These source criticisms of the Pentateuch is associated with documentary hypothesis and assumes four-sources Pentateuch spliced together in the post-exilic period perhaps by Ezra the scribe. This documentary theory or hypothesis was made by Julius Wellhausen, a German scholar in 1876-77 and he postulated that the Pentateuch is a compilation of at least four major literary documents and that the composition process took some four centuries. He built on the works of earlier scholarly works of K. H. Graf, Abraham Kuenen and Herman Hupfield. Graf-Wellhausen documentary hypothesis identified four sources behind the book of Genesis, thus the J, E, D, P. The aim of this higher criticism is to determine the date, authorship, composition and/or unity of the literary works in the Pentateuch and the entire Old Testament and an attempt to identify the main documents which were the sources behind the compilation of the Pentateuch, assuming Moses was not the author. The elements employed in the identification of these blocks were subject matter, the use of divine names (YHWH, Elohim), duplication in materials, similarity in vocabularies and style, uniformity of theological outlook and priestly concerns. In the 'Preface' to his work, T. D. Alexander, claims that most scholarly research on the Pentateuch has sought to (a) discover the existence to these hypothetical sources, (b) explain the process by which they were combined to form the present text, and (c) relate the existence of these earlier sources to the history and religious development of the Israelites prior to the final composition of the Pentateuch in the exilic or post-exilic period (T. D. Alexander, *From Paradise to the Promise Land*, Grand Rapids: Paternoster Press and Baker Academic, 2002, p. xiii-xiv). Whichever way the Pentateuch is viewed, the evidence is obvious that it was composed from sources written many centuries after the events it describes, it was a fairly valid accounts of both the history and the theology of earliest Israel (G. J.



stands out after the Patriarchs as a solitary figure in the Pentateuch. Eighty-two chapters out of the one-hundred and thirty seven chapters of the Pentateuch mention Moses (apart from the book of Genesis ) where his name is not mentioned, his teachings were stated and this makes the name of Moses as a dominating figure in the entire Pentateuch after the patriarchs. The Pentateuch apart from the book of Genesis is well woven around Moses. Some narratives reveal Moses as the author, some referring to him as historian, poet and a lawgiver. The Judeo-Christian Bible definitely affirms that Moses is and remains the author in the post-Patriarchal Pentateuch.

In analysing the above affirmations, attention must be drawn to the fact that the Pentateuch contains passages that could be referred to as 'post-Mosaic editorial work'. These include Deuteronomy 34 which records Moses' death. Again Numbers 12:3 appears to be a later assessment of Moses by someone who knew or studied about him and certainly, he was not an eye witness to the Genesis narratives. Though there are some literary challenges in the Pentateuch such as duplications and contradictions, they do not negate Mosaic affirmations to the Pentateuch; rather, these challenges put forward further question as to how the present Pentateuch we have now came to us. The foregoing allegation on the affirmation of Mosaic authorship does not mean that there was no editorial reduction in the final canonical form of the Pentateuch. Ndjerareou maintains that whoever wrote the Pentateuch, it breathes coherence in its text and its theological content. Its theology is highly relevant to Africa today.<sup>60</sup>

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Wenham, 'Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm' in David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (eds.) *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004, p. 118.)

<sup>60</sup> A. Ndjerareou, 'Introduction to the Pentateuch' in Tokunboh Adeyemo (Gen. ed.) *Africa Bible Commentary*, Nairobi: World Alive Publishers, 2006, p. 7-8



It is generally admitted that some rewriting was done at a later date. Wenham commenting on R. N. Whybray's work, *The Making of the Pentateuch: a Methodological Study*, makes an emphatic statement that 'let us admit that we just do not know much about the growth of the Pentateuch'.<sup>61</sup> The issue of authorship must remain unsolved puzzle until more archaeological evidences prove to answer the question of Pentateuchal authorship. If this statement is acceptable, then the Pentateuch should be accepted as a bridge linking divinity and humanity rather than a document subjected to scientific and archaeological debates.

## 2.4 The Exegesis

The word 'exegesis' is so crucial to biblical studies and it involves detailed analysis and explanation, which aims to illuminate a piece of biblical text that will lead to its useful interpretation. The demands of a good exegetical work involve parsing, that is, dividing the sentence into parts and describing the grammatical function of each word or part. This should conform to the morphological and syntactical order of the language of the text. Exegesis calls for analysing the text to properly understand what the author seeks to communicate.<sup>62</sup> For instance, in parsing Hebrew texts the major parts that are commonly dealt with are: verbs (perfect or imperfect of the seven verb stems), infinitives (absolute and construct), nouns (in two genders: masculine and feminine) and pronouns, adverbs and those that form construct relations. Further, the text should be analysed in its functional context. That is, the religio-historical, socio-economic and politico-geographical situations of the writer and the audience in relation to the present generations. Yamoah analyzed a pattern of Hebrew sentence as follows;

<sup>61</sup> G. J. Wenham, 'Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm' in David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold (eds.) *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2004, p. 132.

<sup>62</sup> P. P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, Chicago: The Moody Press, 1997, p. 21.



Direct object ← indirect object ← subject ← verb ← time<sup>63</sup>

## 2.5 Background to Genesis 12:4-5

The twelfth chapter of the Book of Genesis is the hook that linked the Primeval and Patriarchal history. The narrative presents us with the socio-cultural and religious lives of the patriarchs which began with Abram the son of Terah. The parallels in language and proper names between the Mari records and the traditions of Genesis indicate the existence of a common cultural background and place Israelite tradition on a historic basis relative to the homogeneous culture of the Near East.<sup>64</sup> Biblical scholarship and Judaism hold Abram as both religious and political father of the Judeo-Christian religion.<sup>65</sup> The Hebrew traces their ancestry from Abram the son of Terah from Ur<sup>66</sup> of the Chaldeans. Terah had Abram Nahor and Haran and Sarai<sup>67</sup> as his children. It appears that Abram married the half-sister Sarai and Nahor married his brother Haran's daughter Milcah the sister of Lot and Iscah, therefore Milcah married her uncle Nahor. The narrative probably suggests that Terah named their new dwelling place after his late son Haran who was born in Ur and died there. Haran also became the city of Nahor (Gen. 24:10; 27:43) since Nahor dwell there with his wife Milcah and they had children including Bethuel the father of Rebecca and Laban. In the narrative, Abram moved out of Haran with his wife Sarai and Lot, his nephew, slaves and all possessions he acquired in Haran. Wenham explains that;

Lot is introduced here because of the important role he plays in chapter 13, 14, 18-19. Apparently, at least, unofficially adopted by Abram, he was his presumptive heir until the

<sup>63</sup> J. Yamoah, *A Model Hebrew-English Translation and Application: The Biblical Hebrew Student's Companion*, Kumasi: Classic Graphics, 2012, p. 5.

<sup>64</sup> R.K. Harrison, *Old Testament Times*, London: I.V.P., 1971, p. 81.

<sup>65</sup> B. A. Ntreh, *A Concise History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, Cape Coast: Marcel Hughes Publishing, 2006, p.1.

<sup>66</sup> Ur is known in Mesopotamian texts dated to the third millennium BCE, that there was a city by name Ura in southern Mesopotamia established around 2700 BCE and some scholars have identified Ura with Ur in the Bible. Ntreh, *A Concise History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, p. 1-2.

<sup>67</sup> Sarai the wife of Abram was the daughter of Terah but with a different mother. This means Abram married the half-sister. "But indeed *she* is truly my sister. *She is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife" Genesis 20:12 NKJV.



acrimonious separation described in chapter 13. The fact that Lot accompanied Abram is again mentioned, drawing to the close relationship between them.<sup>68</sup>

Wenham presented a pictorial view of Terah and his children as;

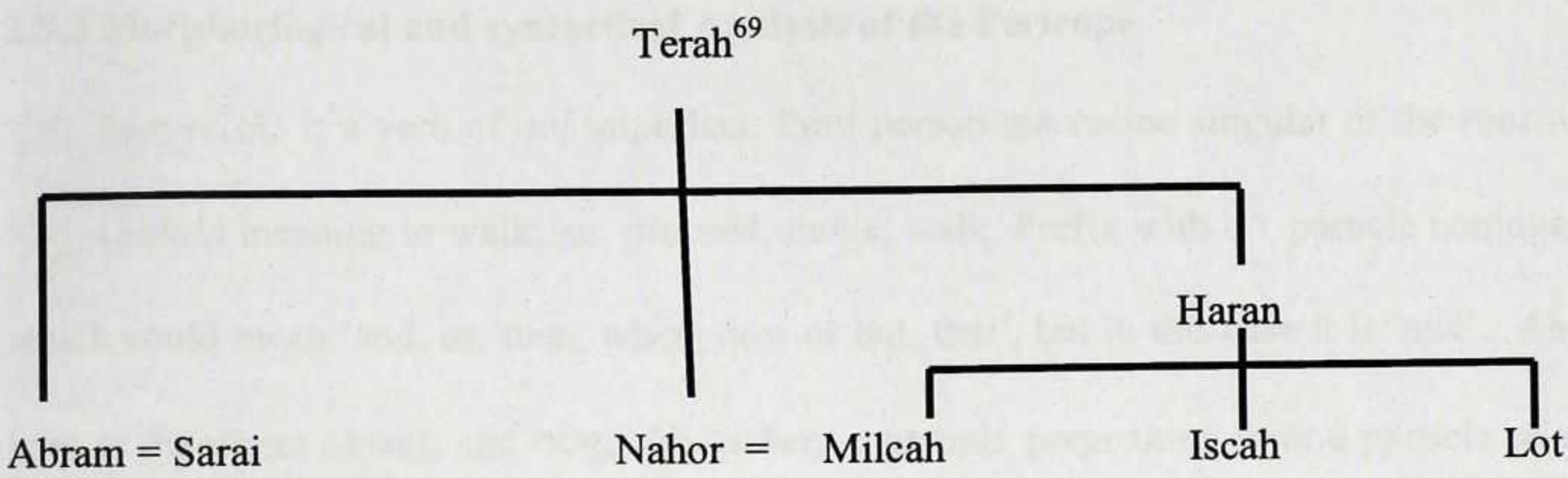


Fig. 2.1 Terah’s family web

2.5.1 The Hebrew Text: Genesis 12:4-5

4 וַיֵּלֶךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו יְהוָה וַיֵּלֶךְ אִתּוֹ לוֹט  
וְאַבְרָם בֶּן־חָמֵשׁ שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן:  
5 וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת־סָרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בֶּן־אָחִיו  
וְאֶת־כָּל־רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן  
וַיֵּצְאוּ לָלֶכֶת אֶרֶצָה כְּנַעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶצָה כְּנַעַן:<sup>70</sup>

Transliteration of the pericope

4 wayyelek 'abram ka'asher dibber 'elayw yhwh wayyelek 'itto lot w<sup>e</sup>'abram ben-hames  
sanim w<sup>e</sup>sib 'im sand<sup>h</sup> b<sup>e</sup>se 'to meharan.5 wayyiqah 'abram 'et-saray 'ishto we 'et-lot ben-

<sup>68</sup> G. J. Wenham, *World Biblical Commentary Vol. 1: Genesis 1-15*. Texas: World Books Publisher, 1987, p. 278.  
<sup>69</sup> G.J. Wenham, *World Biblical Commentary Vol. 1: Genesis 1-15*, p. 272.  
<sup>70</sup> J. P. Green, Sr (Gen ed and Trans.), *The Interlinear Bible Hebrew-Greek-English*. USA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008. P 9.



'ahiw we'et-kol-r<sup>e</sup>kusham 'asher rakashu we'et-hannephesh 'asher-'asu b<sup>e</sup>haran wayyes'u  
laleket 'arsah k<sup>e</sup>na'an wayyabo'u 'arsah kena'an.

### 2.5.2 Morphological and syntactical Analysis of the Pericope

וַיֵּלֶךְ (wayyelek) is a verb of *qal* imperfect, third person masculine singular of the root word הָלַךְ (*halak*) meaning to walk, go, proceed, move, walk. Prefix with a ו particle conjugation which could mean 'and, so, then, when, now or but, that', but in this case it is 'and'. Abram here is the direct object, and כַּאֲשֶׁר (*ka'asher*) a particle preposition with a particle relative which could mean 'as or which.' דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו יְהוָה dibber 'elayw yhwh. 'YHWH spoke to someone (Abram). wayyelek 'itto lot we'abram and Lot went with him (Abram). A critical question could be raised here as; who is Lot, who went with Abram? To help answer the question about the identity of Lot is the verse 5, which is one of our key text?

Literal English translation: *And Abram took Sarai, his wife and Lot, son of his brother and all their properties that they had gained and the persons they had gotten in Haran. And they departed to go into the land of Canaan and they came to the land of Canaan.*

וַאֲחֵי-לוֹט בֶּן-אָחִיו we'et-lot ben-'ahiw

A close reading of Genesis 14:14 gives the impression that, a third person reported to Abram, about the captivity of his brother, wayyishma' 'abvram ki nishbah 'ahiw. The ו particle conjunction expressing the idea of 'and, so, then, when, now, or, but that.' The preceding וַיִּשְׁמָע wayyishma' is a verb of *qal waw* consecutive, imperfect third person masculine singular of the word שָׁמַע shama' and it means to hear or perceive by the ear. 'Abram is the subject



who heard. *כִּי* *ki* means ‘that, and is a particle’<sup>71</sup> which prefixed to sentences depending on the active verb and often introduces the direct narration. *נִשְׁבָּה* *nishbah* is the *niphal* verb third person masculine singular of the verb *שָׁבַח* *shab(v)ah* take him captive and the *niphal* is *be taken captive*. The object in the sentence is *אֶחָיו* *'ahiw* is from the word *אָח* *'ah* a third person common masculine singular noun construct which means *brother*, or a half brother, or a male relative in the wider sense.

In Genesis 13:8, Abram said *אָחִים אֲנַחְנוּ* *'ahim 'anahnu*. Abram used an independent first person common plural pronoun; *we*, following a participle as its subject for emphasis to mean ‘we are brothers.’ Thus Abram himself referred to the relationship between him and Lot as brothers. This was in the context of the aftermath of the strife between Abram’s herdsmen and Lot’s herdsmen resulting in their separation and this made the narrator of Genesis 14:14a to say; *יִשְׁמַע אֲבְרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אֶחָיו*

*wayyishma* ‘*'abram ki nisbah 'ahiw* literal translation: ‘when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive.’ In this case, Lot was not even mentioned at all in the Hebrew text but rather, Abram’s brother was used.

## 2.6 Background of Exodus 12:38

Chapter twelve of the Exodus narrative is a significant chapter. This chapter is crucial because it records the “going out” or the “exodus” which give the book its name. It relates the last dread plague which made possible this departure from Egypt. It describes the festival established to commemorate this great historic deliverance of the children of Israel.<sup>72</sup> The context of Exodus chapter 12 is worthy of note; the first 14 verses constitute the institution and observance of the first Passover; verses 15-20 constitute the instructions for the future

<sup>71</sup> C.L. Seow, *A Grammar Biblical Hebrew*. Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1989, p. 63.

<sup>72</sup> C. R. Erdman, *The Book of Exodus: An Exposition*. New York: Fleming H Revell Company, MCMXLIX, p. 55.



celebration of the Passover; verse 21-28, communicates God's will to the people; verse 29-42 is the long awaited emancipation and the last bit is the admission to the Passover feast.<sup>73</sup> In the exodus narratives and even to this present time of serious research into biblical scholarship, the picture is always painted as if 'Israel' or 'all Israel' is a homogeneous tribe which moved from Canaan to Egypt and out of Egypt to Canaan. The homogeneous tribe used here refers to descendants from the ancestry of Jacob son of Isaac, son of Abraham.

The focus of this work is to appreciate the fact that 'Israel' or 'all Israel' may not be as homogeneous as seems to be presented, but a confederacy of other tribes who look forward to the deliverance of Yahweh. Alfred Edersheim's comment on the Passover meal the Israelites ate before leaving Egypt will be relevant here. He says those who gathered around this meal were not only all Israelites, but must also profess their faith in the coming deliverance, awaiting the signal of their redemption, and in readiness for departing from Egypt.<sup>74</sup> These hopeful groups were what the writer of Exodus 12:38 and Numbers 11:4 described as "a mixed multitude".

### 2.6.1 The Hebrew Text: Exodus 12:38

וְגַם-עָרַב רַב עִלָּה אֲתָם וְצֹאן וּבָקָר מִקְנֵה כְּבֵד מֵאֹד:<sup>38</sup>

Transliteration of the pericope

w<sup>e</sup>gham-'erebv rabv 'ald<sup>h</sup> 'iththam w<sup>e</sup>so 'n ubvaqar migne<sup>h</sup> kabved m<sup>e</sup>'od.

<sup>73</sup> A. Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. 2009. Paraphrased from footnotes 7 on page 186.

<sup>74</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*, p. 185.



### 2.6.2 Syntactical and Morphological Analysis of the Pericope

וְגַם-עִרְבַּ (w<sup>e</sup>gham-‘erebv) וְ w<sup>e</sup> is a particle conjunction meaning ‘and, so then when’, and וְגַם *gham* is also an adverb expressing moreover or also’ and its purpose is to stress the intent of the entire sentence more especially עִרְבַּ -‘erebv which is a noun meaning “mixture” or “mixed company” and joined by a maqef to וְגַם w<sup>e</sup>gham. וְגַם w<sup>e</sup>gham is often used to emphasize the thought of an action in the entire sentence but more especially the word following in this case עִרְבַּ ‘erebv (*a mixed company or multitude*). רַב (rbv) is an adjective masculine singular absolute which mean ‘great, much, many.’ It describes quantity as in number. עָלָה (‘lala<sup>h</sup>) is a *qal* perfect third person masculine singular verb which means to ‘go up, climb or ascend.’ אִתָּם (‘iththam) the word is a particle preposition suffix of third masculine plural meaning ‘with’ denoting proximity that is used to express companionship as in ‘together with.’ וְצֹאן (w<sup>e</sup>so’n) the root word is צֹאן (so’n) which is a common noun, both singular absolute and it means ‘flock, flocks’ of small herds such as sheep and goats. The וְ that prefix the root word is a particle conjunction which means ‘and.’ וּבָקָר (ubvaqar) is masculine singular noun in the absolute state and means ‘cattle, an ox or herd.’ The וְ that prefix the word בָּקָר is a particle conjunction which means ‘and.’ It should have been וְ but because the word is in the absolute, the conjunction changed to וּ. מִקְנֵה (miqune<sup>h</sup>) means ‘cattle.’ כָּבֵד (kabved) is a masculine singular adjective which means ‘heavy’ and qualifying ‘cattle.’ מְאֹד (m<sup>e</sup>’od) is an adverb expressing muchness or abundance in terms of quantity.

Literal English translation of the periscope: Also, a mixed multitude went up with them, also flocks of sheep and goats, and herd of cattle in abundance.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> The researcher’s own translation from the Hebrew text to English.



The text therefore carries the notion that the “mixed multitude” that went up with all Israel was well organized and determined to travel along with the six hundred thousand as recorded in Exodus 12:37.<sup>76</sup> The mixed multitude has been described as a ‘sizable group of non-Israelite people, including Egyptians and others who had intermarried or mingled with the Israelites.’<sup>77</sup> The mixed multitude that went with the Israelites was mentioned again in by the author or editor of the book of Numbers 11:4. From the Numbers narrative, it could be realized that they were very influential as all Israel crave with them for meat to eat at Taberah. Alfred Edersheim mentioned that “Israelites also went up a mixed multitude of varied decent, drawn in the wake of God’s people by signs and wonders so lately witnessed”.<sup>78</sup> What Edersheim is speculating is that the mixed multitude are following all Israel because of what they might witnessed during the deliverance.

## 2.7 Background of Leviticus 2:1

The Book of Leviticus stands out among all other books of the Judeo-Christian Bible because it is an important source of cultic rituals and ceremonies, sacrificial systems, as well as theological reflections. According to Edersheim, the book of Leviticus forms in itself a special and independent part of the Pentateuch and chapters 1-16 tell Israel how to approach God so as to have communion with Him.<sup>79</sup> The main types of sacrifices in the sacrificial system in the book of Leviticus are: Burnt Offering (*'olah*), Cereal Offering (*minha<sup>h</sup>*), Sacrifice of well-being (*selamim*), Sin Offering (*hatta't*), Guilt Offering (*'asam*). The chapter two of Leviticus treats *minha<sup>h</sup>* (~~gift or tribute~~) as grain, cereal or meal offering. Grabbe

<sup>76</sup> Scholars are of the opinion that the number of Israelites who escaped from Rameses could reach two million if children and women were counted together with the six hundred thousand men as recorded by the writer of Exodus 12:37. Some of these Old Testament authorities are: J. D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus Volume 1 Chapters 1-18*, England: Evangelical Press, 2000, p. 261-262; D.M. G. Stalker, ‘Exodus’ in *PBC* 220; p. 185; J. Bright, *A History of Israel 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* London: SCM, 1972, p. 130; Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament: A Classic Biblical Reference to Help You Understand and Apply The History of The Old Testament*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc. 2009, p. 186.

<sup>77</sup> Fleming, *Bridge Bible Commentary*. Brisbane, p. 35.

<sup>78</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*, p. 186.

<sup>79</sup> Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*, p. 225.



explains grain/cereal/meal offering as “raw flour [that] could be used (mixed with oil) or the flour could be baked in an oven, cooked on a griddle, or fried in a pan. It was always unleavened since no leaven was to be burnt on the altar, and was to be salted as a sign of the covenant.”<sup>80</sup> This type offering comprise:

- i. Fine/choice flour from grain/cereal (vv.1-3).
- ii. Cake baked from fine/choice flour produced from grain/cereal (v.4)
- iii. Cooked on a griddle from fine/choice flour produced from grain/cereal (v.5).
- iv. Prepared in a pan, from fine/choice flour produced from grain/cereal (v.7).
- v. Fresh grain/cereal that is coarsely ground and roasted on a fire (v.14).

Balentine, groups the *minha*<sup>h</sup> into three major sections, each corresponding to a different type of grain: uncooked wheat (vv.1-3), cooked wheat (vv. 4-10), and natural barley (vv. 1-16). Verses 11-13 provide special instructions concerning the use of leaven, honey, and salt.<sup>81</sup>

### 2.7.1 The Hebrew Text: Leviticus 2:1

וְנֶפֶשׁ כִּי־תִקְרִיב קֹרְבָן מִנְחָה לַיהוָה סֶלֶת יִהְיֶה קֹרְבָנֶךָ  
וַיִּצֶק עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶן וְנָתַן עָלֶיהָ לִבְנָה:

Transliteration of the pericope

w<sup>e</sup>nephes ki-taqrib qorban minha<sup>h</sup> l'yhwh solet yihye<sup>h</sup> qorbano w<sup>e</sup>yasaq 'ale<sup>y</sup>ha semen  
w<sup>e</sup>natan ale<sup>y</sup>ha lebonda<sup>h</sup>

<sup>80</sup> L. L. Grabbe, *Leviticus*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, p. 31-32.

<sup>81</sup> S. E. Balentine, *Leviticus: Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002, p. 29-30.



### 2.7.2 Syntactical and Morphological Analysis of the Pericope

ו (w<sup>e</sup>) this particle could mean 'and, so, when, now, or, but, that; and נֶפֶשׁ (*nephes*) noun common feminine singular meaning life, living being, soul. כִּי (*ki*) is particle conjunction of all kinds, meaning; 'that, for when, because;' and joined to תִּקְרִיב (*taqrib*) third person *hiphil* imperfect feminine verb by a *maqgef*, expressing the idea of 'to bring near.' The phrase is preceded by קָרְבָּן (*qorban*) noun common masculine singular construct. קָרְבָּן is the main term for offering (or oblation), it is a generic term which refers to variety of types.<sup>82</sup> The next word is מִנְחָה (*minha<sup>h</sup>*) a common feminine singular meaning tribute, offering or gift which is to be presented לַיהוָה. יְהוָה is a proper noun and has no gender, number or state; it is the name of the God of Israel. The name is written as Yahweh or YHWH. לְ which prefix יהוה is the preposition לְ which means 'to for, in regard to, according to, in.' סֹלֶת (*solet*) is a common feminine singular noun in the absolute state and it means 'fine flour.' יִהְיֶה is a third person masculine singular verb. The root word is הָיָה meaning 'to be or become.' קָרְבָּנוֹ (*qorbano*) is third person masculine noun in the construct state and has a third person masculine suffix. The root word is קָרְבָּן (*qorban*) which means offering or oblation. וַיִּצֶק (*w<sup>e</sup>yasaq*) the word is prefixed by וְ a particle conjunction meaning 'and, so, then, when, now' and the verb יִצֶק is a third person masculine singular waw consecutive *qal* perfect verb. It express the idea of 'to pour.' עָלֶיהָ (*'ale<sup>y</sup>ha*) is a particle preposition עַל suffixed with third person feminine singular and it means 'on, upon, above or over.' שֶׁמֶן (*semen*) is a masculine singular noun in the absolute state and it means oil or fat. וַיִּתֵּן (*w<sup>e</sup>natan*) the root word is נָתַן (to give) and it is *qal* perfect third person masculine singular with וְ prefix. לְבֹנָה (*lebona<sup>h</sup>*) is a feminine singular noun meaning 'frankincense'

<sup>82</sup> L. L. Grabbe, *Leviticus*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993, p. 30.



The challenge is that מִנְחָה *minha<sup>h</sup>* has been rendered 'meal' or 'meat' by the King James Version (1611), American Standard Version (1901), and the Bible in Basic English (1949/1964). But in the priestly tradition, this presentation is exclusively cereal/grain or meal, that is non-blood offering, סֵלֶת (*solet*). *Solet* is a common feminine singular noun, meaning 'fine flour' especially used in the household of kings and royal. If *solet* is translated as fine flour, then meal may be less appropriate as the earlier translations may have suggested. On the contrary, most modern translations rendered מִנְחָה *minha<sup>h</sup>* as cereal or grain, and this rendering is reasonable.

## 2.8 Background of Numbers 5:15

The Israelites obeyed God when they came out of Egypt; and Yahweh their God cautioned them against infection. In Numbers chapter five, Moses teaches Israel how to avoid infection.<sup>83</sup> The case presents the conditions for the ritual application of a husband who suspects his wife of adultery. The conditions are to check whether the woman has actually committed the act of adultery in secret. Again, the ritual must verify if the spirit of jealousy has come upon the man even if the wife is innocent and has not defiled herself. This is 'preparations for the ritual ordeal.'<sup>84</sup> The offering is presented without frankincense because it is a jealous offering.

### 2.9.1 The Hebrew Text: Numbers 5:15

וְהָבִיָּא הָאִישׁ אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶל־הַכֹּהֵן וְהָבִיָּא אֶת־קִרְבָּנָהּ  
עָלֶיהָ עֲשִׂירֵת הָאִיפָה קֶמַח שְׁעָרִים לֹא־יִצֹק עָלָיו שֶׁמֶן  
וְלֹא־יִתֵּן עָלָיו לִבְנֵה כִּי־מִנְחַת קִנְאָת הוּא מִנְחַת זִכְרוֹן  
מִזְבֵּחַ עֹון:

<sup>83</sup> M. G. Gutzke, *Plain Talk on Leviticus and Numbers*. Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981, p. 69.

<sup>84</sup> D. T. Olson, *Numbers Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* Louisville: John Knox Press, 1996, p. 35.



## Transliteration of the Pericope

*W<sup>e</sup>hebi' ha'ish 'et-'ishto 'el-hakkohen w<sup>e</sup>hebi' 'et-qorbana<sup>h</sup> 'ale<sup>y</sup>ha 'asirit ha'epa<sup>h</sup> qemah  
s<sup>e</sup>'orim lo'-yisoq 'alayw shemen w<sup>e</sup>lo'-yitten 'alayw l<sup>e</sup>bona<sup>h</sup> ki-minhat qena'ot hu' minhat  
zikkaron makeret a'won*

### 2.8.2 Syntactical and Morphological Analysis of the Pericope

וְהָבִיָּא (*W<sup>e</sup>hebi'*) this word has a prefix וְ which is a particle conjunction and means 'and, so, then, when, now, or, but;' the word is in hiphil verb in the third person masculine singular and means 'to bring in.' הָאִישׁ (*ha'ish*) 'the man, husband,' it a masculine singular noun in the absolute state. אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ (*'et-'ishto*) the is a particle called the direct object maker and it has no meaning; is אִשְׁתּוֹ a singular feminine noun in the construct state; but has third person masculine singular ending as its suffix. The meaning then becomes 'his wife.'

אֶל-הַכֹּהֵן (*'el-hakkohen*) this phrase means 'to the priest.' The אֶל is a preposition and is either 'to, into, towards; הַ is a definite article 'the' and כֹּהֵן is a masculine singular in the absolute state meaning priest. אֶת-קֹרְבָנָה (*'et-qorbana<sup>h</sup>*) means 'gift/offering; the term is used for all kinds of offering. The word קֹרְבָן is a masculine singular noun in the construct state but has a suffix of third person feminine singular, 'her offering.' עָלֶיהָ (*'ale<sup>y</sup>ha*) is a preposition 'on, upon, above, against, over.' The word is עָל and suffix with third person singular. עֲשִׂירִת (*'asirit*) means 'tenth.' It is an feminine singular adjective in the construct state. הָאֵפָה (*ha'epa<sup>h</sup>*) 'the Ephah' is a measure of grain. The word is a feminine singular noun in the absolute.

The key word in this text that is of much concern to this thesis is לֵבֶנָּה (*lebona<sup>h</sup>*). The word is feminine singular noun in the absolute state.; *lebonah* is used in the preparation of holy



incense. It is also used as incense on grain offering with shew-bread. It is also burned as perfume.

## 2.9 Background of Deuteronomy 4:28

The book of Deuteronomy chiefly consists of three discourses of Moses the servant of YHWH, shortly before his ascension to Mount Pisgah in the land of Moab where he died. The text under consideration falls within the domains of the first discourse where Israel is cautioned. Gutzke concludes that "the people were then given specific instructions to move along by the revealed word of God."<sup>85</sup> But in the event of sin, the awaiting punishment is mentioned to all Israel, including the verse under consideration. The text presents idolatry as punishment "And there you shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell' (Deut. 4:28 from King James Version).

### 2.9.1 The Hebrew Text: Deuteronomy 4:28

וְעַבַּדְתֶּם־שָׁם אֱלֹהִים מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם עֵץ וָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר  
לֹא־יִרְאוּן וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּן וְלֹא יֵאָכְלוּן וְלֹא יִרְיֻחוּ:

Transliteration of the Pericope

*wa'abadtem-sham 'elohim ma'ase<sup>h</sup> y<sup>e</sup>de 'adam 'es wa'eben 'asher lo'-yir'un w<sup>e</sup>lo' yishm<sup>e</sup>'un  
w<sup>e</sup>lo' yo'k<sup>e</sup>lun w<sup>e</sup>lo' y<sup>e</sup>rihun*

### 2.9.2 Syntactical and Morphological Analysis of the Pericope

וְעַבַּדְתֶּם־שָׁם (*'abadtem*) the root word is עָבַד (*'abad*) *qal* perfect verb. It has ו as prefix which is a particle conjunction meaning 'and, so, then, now, or, but, that.' The תֶּם (*tem*) is a suffix of

<sup>85</sup> Gutzke, *Plain Talk on Deuteronomy*, 1982, p. 25.



second person masculine *qal* perfect verb. The word is joined by a *maqqeph* (־) to שָׁם (*sham*) an adverb which means 'there' and it is placed in the sentence for emphasis. וְעַבַּדְתֶּם־שָׁם (*'abadtem*) means 'and there, you serve.' אֱלֹהִים (*'elohim*), '*elohim* is a masculine plural noun in the absolute state and means deity, god, God.

מַעֲשֵׂה (*ma'aseh*) meaning 'a deed or work' the act of 'doing' is a masculine singular noun in a construct chain; the construct gives the expression of. יָדַי (*yedey*), the root word יָד means 'hand' as in human hand, but יָדַי (*yedey*), is a feminine dual noun in a construct chain. אָדָם (*'adam*) is masculine singular absolute noun meaning 'man, humankind, human being.' עֵץ (*'es*) a masculine absolute singular noun, expressing the idea of a trees, tree or wood.' וְאֶבֶן (*wa'eben*) the root is אֶבֶן a feminine singular absolute noun prefix by וְ a conjunction 'and' hence the phrase means 'and stone.' אֲשֶׁר (*'asher*) is a particle of relation, expressing the idea of 'who, which, that, because, when, since.' It is a mere connecting link. לֹא־יִרְאוּן (*lo'-yir'un*) meaning 'not seeing.' לֹא (*lo*) is a particle putting יִרְאוּן the word in negative. It is a third person masculine plural in the imperfect. וְלֹא (*welo*) 'and not' יִשְׁמְעוּן (*yishme'un*) 'hearing,' and not יֹאכְלוּן (*yo'kelun*) 'eating' and not יִרְחוּן (*yirihun*) smell. The word is a hiphil imperfect third person plural. Placing the text in the exegetical context, '*elohim* will also mean deities, (both acquired and natural).

## 2.10 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to present the background, message and authorship of the Pentateuch; with the exegesis of the following Pentateuchal texts: Genesis 12: 4-5, Exodus 12:38, Leviticus 2:1, Numbers 5:15 and Deuteronomy 4:28. The next chapter discusses a historical



sketch of the Dangme from their aboriginal home to their present state. It also extends its tentacles to make mention of the development of the Dangme into both instructional language into which the Bible has been translated.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THE DANGME

#### 3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the background message of the Pentateuch and exegesis of selected Pentateuchal texts to buttress the foregoing argument on some translation challenges that affect reading and interpretation in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ ɔ*, (Dangme Bible). This present chapter traces the origin of the Dangme – the reading community. The development of Dangme to status of an instructional language into which the Bible has been translated is also dealt with under this chapter.

#### 3.1 The Dangme People

The Dangme<sup>86</sup> are a West African people dwelling in modern Ghana and they are about the third largest ethnic group in southern Ghana aside *Akan* and *Ewe*. There are eight tribes forming the Dangme State and these are: *Adaa*, *Nugo*, *Gbugbla*, *Kpom*, *Sɛ*, *Yilɔ-Klo*, *Manya-Klo* and *Osudoku*; anglicised as: *Ada*, *Ningo*, *Prampram*, *Kpone*, *Shai*, *Yilo krobo*, *Manya Krobo* and *Osudoku* respectively. The first four tribes are situated along the eastern coast of Ghana, sandwiched between the *Ewe* tribes and the *Ga* people. The other four are interior mountain dwellers also located between the *Akan* race; *Akyem*, *Akwapim* and *Akwamu*. They occupy the Eastern Region and the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The Dangme tribes predominantly have fishing, farming, weaving, and carving as their occupation and their language is Dangme. Dangme society in general is patrilineal, yet with a form of matrilineal. Patrilineal in short means: a child belongs to, enjoys first right and owes first duties to his

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<sup>86</sup>Dangme, during the process of its development, suffered inconsistencies in its spelling such as: Adagbe, Adangbe, Adangme or Adangme. Older manuscripts and books have these variant spellings.



paternal agnatic kin.<sup>87</sup> In the patrilineal system of inheritance, emphasis is placed on legitimacy of the child's procreators, since descent is traced through the father. On the contrary, a relationship in which the essential marital rites are not performed, a child born out of that relationship is not an illegitimate-child; since he/she inherits a kind of matrilineal inheritance. The child is called '*Yo bi*' (a woman's child) and inherits the mother's father or grandfather, though the real father can later claim the child through a customary rite known as *La po mi*.<sup>88</sup>

The people known today as Dangme identified themselves as *La li* (La people or people of La). However, the Dangme people who live beyond the River Volta, in the Volta Region of Ghana, identify themselves as *Le li*. These are the people of *Agɔtime* or *Agɔtsom* (people who live in royal palm). Reindorf brings out the issue of the *Le* people in the Volta Region as Dangme people. He writes "...thence to the Volta where were situated the districts of the Les, speaking Adangme, the mother dialect of the Ga."<sup>89</sup> He continued to say that "the *Le* people reached from Mount Langma to the Volta." They have same tongue, cultural values, mores and rites as the Dangme people who call themselves *La li*. In supporting the authenticity of the *La* claim and identity, Terkperterey writes that "*Dangme li kaa bɔ nɛ wa le mɛ amlɔ nɛ ɔ hi ma kake kɛ kuu kake mi blema lokoo. Biɛ nɛ a kɛ le mɛ jamɛ a be ɔ mi ji 'La Li.'*"<sup>90</sup>

[The Dangme people as they are known now, stayed in one community in primeval times. The name they were known and called then was people of La].

<sup>87</sup> H. Huber, *The Krobo: Traditional Social and Religious Life of a West African People*. Fribourg: St. Paul's Press, 1973, p. 23.

<sup>88</sup> *La po mi*; this is a rite among the Krobo which is performed to make children born out of wordlock to inherit their own father. The father of the children who did not lawfully marry the woman before having children with her, the children will be named by the woman's father and the children in turn inherit their grandfather. When the man wants the children, he is asked to pay a fine which should include a castrated ram, money, schnapps and other gifts. The man then takes the children and then re-name them.

<sup>89</sup> C. C. Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2007, p. 23.

<sup>90</sup> T.T. Terkperterey, *Dangme Blebo Nɔ: Dangme Culture*. Volume One. Odumase-Krobo: Universal Printing Press, 2004, p. 7.



The tribes forming the Dangme State have their La names as follows:

Table 3:1 Anglicised and *La* names of the Dangme tribes

TRIBE	ANGLICISED	LA NAME
Adaa	Ada	La Okɔ
Nugo	Ningo	La Sibi
Gbugbla	Prampram	La Kpɛ
Kpom	Kpone	La Segɔ (Kplɛku)
Sɛ	Shai	La Sɛku (ladoku)
Klo (Yilo)	Yilo Krobo	La Aklo
Klo (Manya)	Manya Krobo	La Aklo
Osudoku	Osudoku	La Gbɛsɛ / Lanɔ

These La names were the aboriginal identity of the tribes.

3.2 Migration

The tribes of the world have been moving in search for a safe dwelling place since creation and the primeval narratives allude to this fact. Therefore the search for a safe dwelling place has been the basis of migration from one place of abode to another in search of peace, freedom and sustainable livelihood. The Dangme or *La li* seem to be people whose identity, original language and culture and other anthropological values might have suffered slight corruption with the effect of migration. It seems that they were sojourners from a destination in the ancient Northern Palestine province.<sup>91</sup> Oral tradition and *Klama*<sup>92</sup> alluded to the fact

<sup>91</sup> In biblical history, there were a Northern Palestine people whose identity and the end of their story in the Northern Palestine region seem to be the beginning of the migration of the Dangme or *La* state. This people are the people of Laish or Leshem (Leshem, a variant spelling of Laish) mentioned in Joshua 19:47 and Judges 18:7-29. The author of the book of Judges described these people as living securely, undisturbed and unsuspecting may be without a king. Biblical records explain that Laish/Leshem had very fertile land, meaning farming will be their occupation; in fact Laish/Leshem is a place that lacks nothing on earth! The Danites after invading Laish conquered and drove the people out and the Danites rebuild the city and named it Dan after their ancestor Dan, the son of Israel. The Dangme are believed to be the people of Laish/Leshem, who fled their homeland because the Danites attack, in search of safety. It is possible that their language and cultural values might experience slight corruption which could possibly reduce their name Laish to La and Leshem to Le.



that the Dangme descended from Israel, though this study carries a different opinion. FIORGBOR in his long essay presented to School of Ghana Languages, Ajumako in 1986, claims that:

*Dangme li a biε kpa hu ji La li. Lɔ ɔ he Manya Klo ɔ La li ji mε. Nε bɔ nε La li a kɔ nya ni peemi kε kusumi komε kε Islae nihi komε kɔ ha a, nɔje tsɔ be he kaa blema ko ɔ a kε La li ɔmε hi he kake hyε. Olua Mamatta ye he odase kaa Dangme aloo La li kple si kl je Sudan.*<sup>93</sup>

[The Dangme are also called La li. Therefore the people of Manya Krobo are also La li. Cultural patterns and traditions of the La li prove some similarities with some cultural patterns and traditions of the people of Israel. There is no much dispute that they ever stayed together. Mr Mamatta also testified that the Dangme or the people of La descended from Sudan].

Fiorgbor's claim though cannot be substantiated, is supported by ton of oral traditions and oral history among the Dangme. Their Northern Palestine origin and Sudan stopover, never received much documentation. Smith explains that "almost all the inhabitants of Ghana are of Sudanese Negro stock with a small admixture of Hermit in the north. Oral traditions give reason to believe that they came mostly from the Sudan area although the Gas, Adangmes and Ewes reached Ghana from the east."<sup>94</sup> Reindorf also supported this claim as he mentioned that Ga and Adangme tribes emigrated together from the East. The Dangme settled in *Samε*<sup>95</sup> and to this, Reindorf writes '*Samε*, a country situated between two rivers, *Efa* and *Kpola*, near Niger, is supposed to have been the former seat of the Adangme tribes.

<sup>92</sup> *Klama* is the indigenous language and song of the ancient and modern Dangme nation. The current Dangme language derived from *Klama*, the cultural language of the Dangme nations. *Klama* has been preserved by the older generation, priests and priestesses, because the historical songs, culture, herbalism and aphorisms of the Dangme nation are enshrined in it. T.T. N. Accam, 'Forward' M.E. Kropp Dakubu ed. *Dangme and Klama Proverbs Part I* Legon: IAS, 1972, p. 1.

<sup>93</sup> S. T. FIORGBOR, *Nadudomi Ngε Manya Klo*. Unpublished Long Essay Submitted to the School of Ghana Languages, Ajumako, 1986, p. 1.

<sup>94</sup> Smith, *The Presbyterian Church of Ghana 1835-1960*, p.3.

<sup>95</sup> It has not been possible tracing *Same* or the two great rivers mentioned, *Efa* and *Kpola* on either Niger or Nigeria maps as claimed by C. Reindorf. However, Teyegaga, *Dipo Custom and the Christian Faith*. Accra: J'Piter Press Ltd. 1985, p.11, made a claim that *Same* today is a semi grass land between Dahome now (Benin) and Nigeria in the Ogum state called (*Sεmε*) the ancestral home of the Dangmes – who were known and called Le, La and Dangme people.



The hostility of their neighbouring tribes<sup>96</sup> caused them to quit the place; leaving Oyo on the North and Dahome on the South.<sup>97</sup> Azu on his part also sighted *Same* as an island situated on the south west of river *Ogum* adjoining *Ladah* and Dahome.<sup>98</sup> For a reason that earlier writers could not authenticate the Palestine origin of the Dangme, the people now settled on *Same* unanimously as their ancestral home. Azu, recounted that, from *Same* they journeyed to *Akpe* and continued to *Zugu*<sup>99</sup> where they encountered *Apete Sukluku*<sup>100</sup> the king who demanded human lives for their passage through his colony. These episodes are captured in these Klama songs:

*Apete Sukluku, moo ngmee zu he, se mo ji Zutse!*

Meaning 'Apete Sukluku, release the land for it belongs to you'!

Another Klama song:

*A kpa nge Zago (Zugu) Ne a nu nge La (Ladah)*

Meaning 'They cried at Zago (zugu) and it was heard in La (Ladah).

An oral tradition has it that during their encounter with *Apete Sukluku*, his demands and oppressions, the wayfarers cried out calling their brethren at *Ladah*. The migrants departed from *Zugu* and headed towards *Huatsi*<sup>101</sup> and then continued to *Tuwo* in Togoland, attacking and conquering minor tribes along their way. The exodus continued to *Tsamla* where they stayed for some years before moving to *Kpesi* and stayed there and made acquaintances. Together with some of the *Kpesi* friends, they departed to *Atakpame* also in Togoland. They

<sup>96</sup> The neighbouring tribes have been named as the *Babalulu* tribe that attacked and drove the La li or Dangme people out of *Same*. Teyegaga, p. 11.

<sup>97</sup> Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., p. 47.

<sup>98</sup> Azu, 'Adangbe (Adangme) History', p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> Zugu is at the northern part of Togoland. The name on the old Togo map was written as Zoo Goo.

<sup>100</sup> Apete Sukluku, the king of Zugu (Azu spelt the name, Apete Sukluku, while Teyegaga spelt it Opete Zungmlugmu) who demanded the sojourners pay for their passage through his territory with seven human lives.

<sup>101</sup> The then king of Huatsi was Ago Koli, a very wicked king who enslaved the Dangme people for years before they flee together with the Anlo people. It is spelt *Hwatshi* by C. Reindorf.



continued marching to *Agɔmɛ* where their brethren settled to this day. The people of *Agɔmɛ* call themselves *Le li* and live beyond the River Volta. All the rest crossed the Volta at *Ayibɔm*, (a small village between Akrade and Kpong) and arrived at Tagologo as a unified *La* people.

### 3.3 The Schism

The narration this far never contained a human figure with the title King. This means that right from their Palestine home, they never lived in kingdoms and so had no monarchy. Rather their system of governance was theocracy, with each *La* tribe having spiritual leader(s) in the form as priestly-warriors who led under divine intuition. Under this kind of leadership, they settled in tribes on the plains between *Nɔwɛyɔ* and *Manya – Paplayo*. Teyegaga described this area as the present Osudoku, Akuse, Zago Hue near River Okue, the Krobo Mountain and *Lɔɔɔ* hills.<sup>102</sup> The Dangme settled and prospered and became mighty and expelled all enemies. It might be possible that their name changed from *La li* or *Le li* to their present name Dangme at this point.

According to oral tradition, the people became a strong unified force, expelling all others that come to fight them. This made their neighbouring *Anglo* people, to describe them as *Ada wo*, meaning warriors and their language became *ada wo gbe*. Etymologically, *Adawogbe* means the voice/language of the warriors. The name changed in spelling and pronunciation with the passage of time to *Adagbe*, *Adangme*, *Adangme* and now Dangme.

A legend has it that the people stayed at *Tagologo* for a longer period until an issue broke out and they separated. They renamed the place *Lɔɔɔ*; an Ewe phrase meaning ‘love is finished.’

<sup>102</sup> B. D. Teyegaga, *Dipo Custom and the Christian Faith*. Accra: J’piter Printing Press Ltd., 1985, p. 16.



Reindorf explained that 'having no king but every tribe its own priest leader or headman, there was no difficulty in separating.'<sup>103</sup> The Krobo tribes (Manyia and Yilo) went to the Krobo Mountain under the leadership of *Muase* and *Maja*, both hunters and *Kloweki* a priestess. Part of the Osudoku people who moved to Ga, maintained their name as Osu, the other group kept their aborigine name La. The rest of the people departed to their present locations.

### 3.4 The worldview of the Dangme

The Dangme State has a worldview which they uphold and live up to. Worldview is a person's way of thinking about and understanding life, which depends on their beliefs and attitudes.<sup>104</sup> Worldview may also mean the way a person understands and interprets issues and circumstances that befall him or her and others. O'Donovan explains world view as the view a person has of his world.<sup>105</sup> A person's worldview is the spectacle through which he or she sees what is true, right, good, moral, bad, evil and wrong.

Dangme has its own way of constructing knowledge, understanding, analysing and evaluating social, moral, religious, economical, political and ethical phenomena. Dangme before and after the schism, are united only by their culture, religious beliefs, and language; all put together in a functional context as Dangme worldview.

Culture is the way of life of a people, brought forth from generation to generation as their response to environmental reactions. Culture grows and when a primeval culture comes into contact with contemporary culture, the primeval culture is suppressed and sometimes killed,

<sup>103</sup> Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., p. 48.

<sup>104</sup> Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 7<sup>th</sup> edition

<sup>105</sup> W. O'Donovan, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective*. India: Oasis International Ltd. 1997, p. 3.



giving way to the contemporary culture to dominate; this is why culture is said to be dynamic.

John Corrie says the concept of culture came to include material (technological), social (customs), and ideational (world-view, language, symbols, and religion) dimensions.<sup>106</sup> He placed worldview in the domain of culture; hence worldview becomes a subset of culture. But worldview rather gives culture its authenticity, because it is the worldview that places culture into a functional context. According to Asante, culture is 'the sum of patterns of behaviour acquired from humans' dealings with their environment and transmitted to later generations through art and symbols, the aims of which is to define a group's identity and aspiration, to serve as the basis of social behaviour, and as a factor determining what is to be accepted or rejected in a given situation.<sup>107</sup> He explained 'this definition of culture underscores culture as dealing with a specific way of life. This specific way of life includes a specific way of thinking, of living, and of viewing the universe. This definition and explanation cross over from culture to worldview. Though worldview and culture looks fused, there is a point of divergence. Culture is an overt attitude and worldview is a covert attitude of a people and it is easy to exhibit a people's culture, but one need the heart of the people to accept their worldview.

All people have culture and worldview and these are the spectacles by which they profess what they speak, wear, eat, vocation, and even their belief. It is a people's worldview that makes them strangers to others, even if they spoke the same language, eat the same food, and wear the same cloths. An individual person shares the worldview of the background group he or she belongs. A worldview of a person is defined by environmental factors such as the

<sup>106</sup> J. Corrie, *Dictionary of Mission Theology*. Nothengham: InterVersity Press, 2007, p. 82.

<sup>107</sup> E. Asante, *Culture, Politics and Development: Ethical and Theological Reflection on the Ghanaian Experience*. Ghana: Challenge Enterprise, 2007, p. 2.



community where the person grew up, the social education the person had, and the religious discipline the person is subjected to.

The worldview of a group is very necessary in determining the group's faith, and their interpretation of the sacred and secular. It is the worldview on which the people build their theology, interpret the Scriptures and applied biblical principles. This is the intent of the research, to investigate how much biblical interpretation is influenced by worldview. The Dangme worldview is a covert attitude on which their culture is based and few themes will be considered: rulership, humanity according to the Dangme, the religious life of the people and the idea of the Creator God.

### 3.4.1 Rulership

Rulership among the Dangme is worthy of study with the reason that the Dangme had a unique and distinctive system of rulership. Their rulership style is absolute theocracy, thus a system of governance where rulers were priests. The primeval Dangme had a system of governance like the ancient Hebrew before the time of the monarchy; hence the idea of chieftaincy and stools is quite borrowed. Akrong after a careful study of the Dangme (Ga-Dangme) governance, comments that this form of traditional governance can, properly speaking be described as theocracy.<sup>108</sup> The ruler here is a priest whose rulership mandate is given by the deity of the land. Ray opines that the main task of a priest is to sustain and renew the life of the community he serves. Often the priest contains within himself the life-force which he seeks to mandate his people.<sup>109</sup> The irony here is that though the people are not monotheistic, all other priests are subjects to the divine ruler, whose authority is constructed based on rules, taboos and rituals of the deity.

<sup>108</sup> A. Akrong, 'Religion and Traditional Leadership in Ghana' in Irene K. Odotei and Albert K. Awedoba (Eds.) *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*. Accra, Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2006, p. 202.

<sup>109</sup> B. C. Ray, *African Religions: Symbol, Ritual and Community*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1976, p. 116.



This pre-monarchical theocratic governor is the *Lanimo* or *Lenimo*, which is translated “Lord over lords” or “King over kings”<sup>110</sup>. *Lanimo*’s position is both religious and political. It is religious in the sense that he mediates between ‘*Nyingmo*’ and His people. Politically, *Lanimo* must be a warrior in all respect, to lead the people to battle. Reindorf mentioned that the ‘Le or Ningo or Adangme’s king had the title Ladingcour or Lanimo.’<sup>111</sup> The next in the hierarchal-theocratic rulership is the *Ga nɔ* literally translated the ‘Wise one’ but could mean wise counsellor who has command over towns. He has both spiritual and political oversight of the people. He settles disputes and he is the judge of the land. On these two positions, Reindorf writes ‘Lanimo, the father of Late Odoi, who was the first King of the Krobo (Dangme) was both priest and king, and Sodshe was the most powerful general of the priest (*Ga nɔ*), having command of sixteen towns.’<sup>112</sup> Occupation to these positions is by *Nyingmo*’s own prerogative. *Konɔ* is the next in the hierarchy and it means the one who is carried on the shoulder as a sign of honour or respect during public functions. This has no religious or spiritual association; rather it is a leader of the youth for communal or public work and gives guidelines as to people’s behaviour.

The taboos, laws and rituals of the Dangme are embedded in the *Jemeli* who service the *Jemɛ a wɔ*. According to Akrong, the *Jemeli* (which he spelt *Djemeli*) function as the custodians of the taboo laws that controlled human life on the whole. He translates *Jemeli* as rulers of the world who because of their knowledge and wisdom about life can rule the people in the sense of showing them how to live the good life.<sup>113</sup> In contrast to Akrong’s opinion, the *Jemeli* are a batch of religious rulers who are pure in conscience and behaviour and their functions

<sup>110</sup> Azu, ‘Adangbe (Adangme) History.’ Arranged and translated by Enoch Azu in 1926, p. 20

<sup>111</sup> Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., p. 23.

<sup>112</sup> Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed p.70.

<sup>113</sup> Akrong, ‘Religion and Traditional Leadership in Ghana’, p. 203.



include, purging the land of sin, misfortunes and curses (*musu jemi*). Akrong was right to say that *wɔnɔ ɔmɛ*, the priests were at later dates incorporated into the *Jeme li*.

This type of rulership has given way to chieftaincy leadership with the *Lanim* or *Lenimo* and *Ga nɔ* are reserved to cultic use and in the domains of religious practitioners; example *Wanim* now means our overlord and used to address *Jemɛ a wɔ nɔ* (sacred priests). *Ga nɔ* on the other hand made its way into the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ ɔ* to mean officials. Chieftaincy was almost certainly introduced as a political structure to breathe some military organisation into Dangme rulership. It is noteworthy that the chief stools were introduced somewhere about eighteenth century as war stools.

### 3.4.2 Humanity According to the Dangme

In the worldview of the Dangme, is the concept of humanity. It is held that human beings are in transition from *huanimi* (the spirit world), into *jemi* (this material world), then to *gbeje* or *gboje* (the world of the dead or Hades), then to *anɛwe* or *bosowe* (where one spends eternity).

#### 3.4.2.1 *Huanimi*

The Dangme belief is that all human beings come from *huanimi*, (the spirit world) to *jemi* (this physical world) and *Nyingmo* (the Supreme Being) is its overlord. *Huanimi* has no geographical location, yet it is believed that 'people' live there in families such as husbands, wives, children, just as they are here on earth. It is believed that people live there in the form of (*kla* or *susuma*).<sup>114</sup> According to this assumption, a person predetermines how his/her life should be on earth at *huanimi*; life span, marital status, ability to bear children, even how one

<sup>114</sup> *Susuma* or *Kla*: they are likely to be derived from the neighbouring Akan vocabulary *susum* and *kra*. According to G.J. Christerller *Dictionary of Asante and Fante Languages*, p.484 and 262 respectively. Cited in Hugo Huber. They mean the soul and the spirit of man.



departs this physical life. These are termed *Sesɛɛ* (destiny or fate). To the Dangme, the human soul or spirit does not die, but passes on to the next state. Terkpetey expresses this idea as; *Kla a ji nɔ nɛ woɔ siade ha nɔmlɔ, nɛ lɛ ji nɔmlɔ nitɛ ɔ nɛ. Kla a gbo we.*<sup>113</sup> [It is the soul that decides one's fortune; it is the real human being. It does not die].

This opinion about the Dangme is based on their belief in the immortality of the human soul.

#### 3.4.2.2 *Jemi (the physical world)*

It is believed that on entry into the physical world, one must fulfil the obligation of *Sesɛɛ*. *Sesɛɛ* may be translated as destiny or fate; thus life is already predestined from *huanimi*. This may be similar if not the same understanding as the Calvinist's theology of predestination in Romans 28:29-30. Nevertheless, one can change for better or for worse; if for better the soul lives happily in the body, but if for worse, the soul leaves the human body. It is common to hear the 'depressed, the disturbed, the frustrated, being described as "*E kla je e se* or *E susuma je e se*." That is to say 'his/her soul has left him/her. To the Dangme, when a human body is disturbed, the soul departs from the body leaving the body in a state of distress. When a person exits this physical life, he/she pass on to the land of the dead – *Gbeje*.

#### 3.4.2.3 *Gbeje*

'*Gbogboe hi a je* or *Gbeje*' means the world of the dead. The Dangme believe that it is the human body that dies, but the soul goes to a place where another form of life exists. At death, the soul departs to *gbeje*, a stopover kind of place. At *gbeje*, the soul is known as *kpade* (this word is translated as ghost) and waits a form of judgement from the *Nimeli* (ancestors) who are just in their verdict. The soul hovers between 'the land of the dead' and 'the land of the living' as it awaits the jury's verdict. They believe these two worlds are in

<sup>113</sup> Terkpetey, *Dangme Blebo Nɔ Dangme Culture*, p.14.



constant interaction with each other; hence the dead can be called through soothsayers to tell about what killed them, and how their funeral should be conducted. The ancestors have the power to bless and curse, to save and to kill, to heal and to afflict with sickness; and whether to accept the deceased being sent to them or not. Geographically, they believe that *gbeje* is beyond the oceans or the seas (*wo se*). Therefore when a person dies and is about to be buried, money and some items are put in the coffin of the deceased, to enable the departing relative to pay the ferry charge so he/she will be ferried across the oceans and live there with the items. But the dead can be at *gbeje* and oversee the world of the living. They can be called to help the living solve problems, through soothsayers. It is often heard in their prayer to the dead as:

*Ke o ya a nɛ o ya da wo kpongu nɔ nɛ o gbaa wɔ*<sup>116</sup> [When you get there, stand on an Isle in the sea and bless us].

After the judgement from the *Nimeli*, the soul passes to the next stage. This might be similar to the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory,<sup>117</sup> where the dead awaits judgement.

#### 3.4.2.4 *Anɛ we aloo Boso we*

The last stage of the Dangme worldview of the human being is *Anɛ we* or *Boso we*.<sup>118</sup> It is their opinion that after judgement by the *Nimeli* (the ancestors), the righteous and the just are

<sup>116</sup> Terkperley, *Dangme Blebo Nɔ: Dangme Culture*, p. 15.

<sup>117</sup> The teachings of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches set forth a place of temporal punishment in the intermediate realm known as purgatory, in which it is held that all those who die at peace with the church, but who are not perfect must undergo penal and purifying suffering. Only those believers who have attained a state of Christian perfection are said to go immediately to heaven. All unbaptized adults and those who after baptism have committed mortal sin go immediately to hell. The great mass of partially sanctified Christians die in fellowship with the church but nevertheless encumbered with some degree of sin go to purgatory, where, for a longer or shorter time, they suffer until all sin purge away, after which they are translated to heaven. W. A. Elwell (ed); *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology 2<sup>nd</sup>*, Michigan: Grand Rapids; 2006, p. 972.

<sup>118</sup> *Anɛ we aloo Boso we*; this means *Anɛ's home or Boso's home*. This rhetorical question is asked by mourner and sympathizer when someone dies, as to where the person soul will spend eternity? It is not too clear which place represents punishment and which is for reward.



sent to a place of rest from the toils of this world; and the wicked and evil doers are sent to a place of punishment and torment. The distinction here is not too apparent as to which place carries the notion of punishment for the wicked and which place carries the notion for eternal rest or reward for the righteous. At the death of a person, elderly mourners and sympathizers ask: *E nε ɔ nε, e yaa Anε we aloo Boso we* [As for this, is he/she going to Anε's home Boso's home]?

This is similar to the Christian doctrine of Heaven or Paradise and Hell.

In sum, this worldview of the Dangme about the human being is not cyclical as T. T. Terkper tey put it; that from *Huanimi*, one goes to *Jemi* then to *Gbeje* and then back to *Huanimi*. Rather, it is a journey with indefinite course, because some people pass from *Huanimi* to *Gbeje* (in the case of stillbirth) and some people come to *Jemi* with distinctive marks. Such people are believed to come back to *Jemi* from *Gbeje* and are called *Gboba* 'died and has come back.' The concept of *Gboba* has not been thoroughly investigated by this study. Diagrammatically, the Dangme worldview of the human being is represented as:

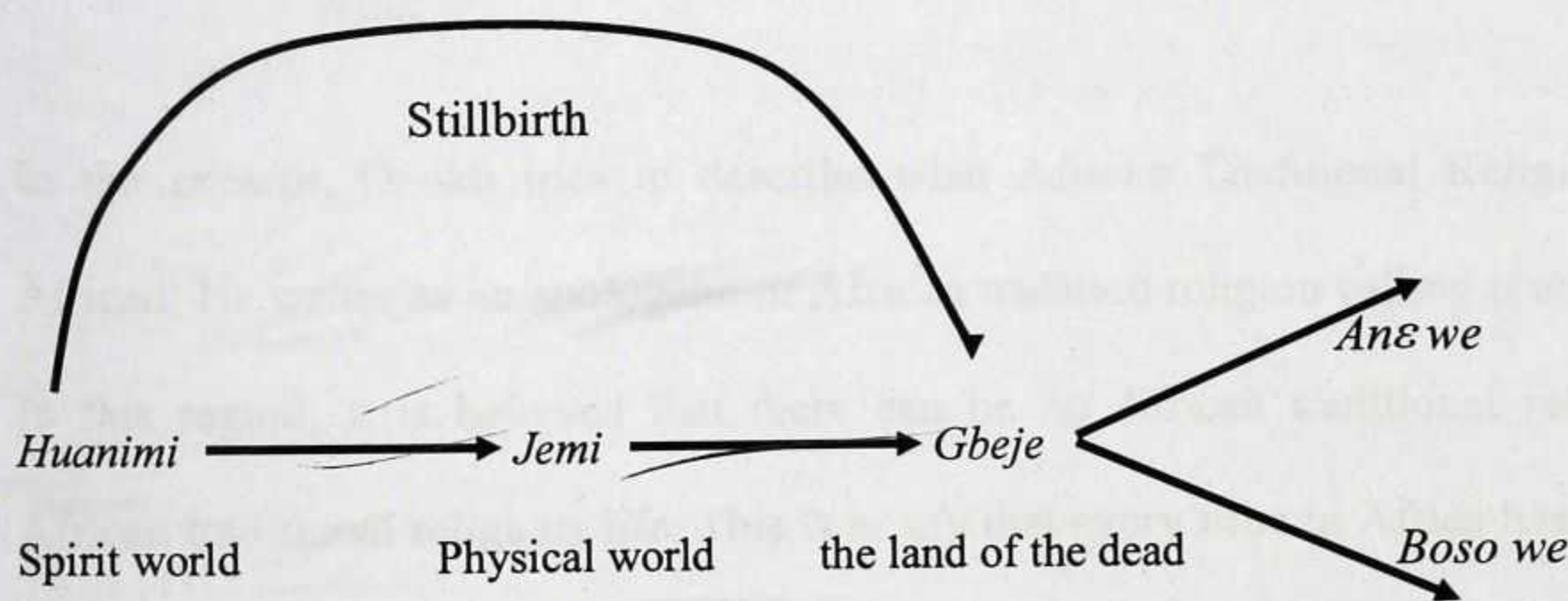


Fig. 3.1 Dangme worldview of the Human Being



### 3.5 The Religious life of the Dangme

The Dangme are religiously pluralistic people hence it is impossible to have a pre-westernized Dangme who is an atheist or one who does not owe allegiance to any deity. As African people, the Dangme traditional religions cannot be defined, but rather be described, because it has no limits and boundaries. It can be explained and defended that the Dangme has no religion, but a religious life of a people brought forth from generation to generation, as they attempt to interact with reality and truth. Traditional religions like cultures grow and when indigenous traditional religion encounters a modern religion, the aboriginal religion is sometimes suppressed and killed. This has been the case of the Dangme in light its encounter with Westernization and foreign religions. Opoku views African Traditional Religion as one that:

Hardly needs pointing out, [it] is part of the religious heritage of humankind. Born out of the experience and deep reflection of our forebearers, it provides answers to the deep stirring of the human spirit and elaborates on the profundity of a experiences of divine-human encounter based on the resources of Africa's own cultural heritage and insight. It also provides answers to the ultimate question posed by men and women in Africa, gives meaning and significance to human life. Explains the origin an destiny of human beings, how everything in the world came into being and the relationship that should exist between them. In short, it is Africa's own way of coming to terms with reality.<sup>119</sup>

In the excerpt, Opoku tries to describe what African Traditional Religion meant to the African. He writes as an apologetic of African tradition religion calling it an ending heritage. In this regard, it is believed that there can be no African traditional religion but rather, African traditional religious life. This is to say that every tribe in Africa has its own religious beliefs and cultures which define the tribe's being. The fact remains that no single tribe's religion can stand to represent the whole of the African continent. Africa practices traditional

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<sup>119</sup> K. A. Opoku, *African Traditional Religion: An Ending Heritage in Religious Plurality in Africa* in Jacob K. Olupona, and Sulayman S. Nyang (eds) *Essays in Honour of John S. Mbiti*, New York: Mouton De Gruyter, 1993, p. 67.



religion rather than it being just a doctrine, is expressed well as Ojike adduces "if religion consists of deifying one character and crusading around the world to make him acceptable to all mankind, then the African has no religion. But if religion means doing rather than talking, then the African has a religion."<sup>120</sup> It could be deduced that Africa's religions are more ritualistic than ceremonial and that is what Dangme traditional religious life stands to represent.

### 3.5.1 The Idea of the Creator God

The Dangme like many African societies had the idea of a Supreme Being whose name is well known among them before the coming of the Basel missionaries in 1829.<sup>121</sup> It is just that they lack the idea that this Supreme Being revealed the Self in Christ Jesus the Son. Huber explains this point by referring to the earliest missionaries. In view of the early date (1867) of the following excerpt from a report of J. Zimmermann, who together with Aldinger were missionaries in the Krobo area, it is hardly possible to doubt that the name and concept of a Supreme Being, go back to the days before Christian missionaries arrived among the Krobo (one of the Dangme tribes). Zimmermann writes:

Both are written in their pagan hearts, viz. that is a God, and that God is one. I have never become acquainted with any pagan who would have denied the existence of the one God, except perhaps in the case of an apostate Christian. In the language of this tribe as well as the two neighbouring idioms Twi and Ewe there exist no plural form of the term for "God"; for a deity, fetish, idol; a quite different term is used. Of God, they say that he himself, being eternal and not created, is the creator of heaven and earth. His name is often used and even thanks are rendered to him. In general way people believe themselves to be protected by him; he is called "Father", "Father of all" etc. This is however, the entire service and worship, which the Negroes render to this one God. Their fears and trust have no direct relation to him, but rather to other beings.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>120</sup> M. Ojike, *My Africa*. New York: John Day, 1946, p.18.

<sup>121</sup> The first set of Basel missionaries that berth on December 18, 1828, three of them died in Ningbo.....

<sup>122</sup> Huber, *The Krobo: Traditional Social and Religious Life of a West African People*, p. 234. Huber translated this piece from German. "Der Evang. Heidenbote", 1867, p. 42.



In the write-up, the Zimmermann did not give the name of this one God though his name is often used. This name is revered among them; hence the people prefer to call their God *Mau*<sup>123</sup> or *Laosiada*.<sup>124</sup> However, *Nyingmo*<sup>125</sup> could be the aboriginal name that Zimmerman failed to mention in his writings<sup>126</sup>. When the Bible was being translated into Dangme, the Hebrew name יהוה YHWH has been transliterated *Yawε* to mean the Creator God in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ௩. This may be because the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים *Elohim* has been translated sometimes as “*mawuhi*”, a plural form of *Mawu*.

The above establishes the fact that the Dangme have a worldview of a Supreme Being called by a sacred name, *Nyingmo* the creator God. *Nyingmo* may be so sacred to the people that they prefer to call the Supreme Being by the Ewe adopted name, *Mawu*, but spelt *Mau*. To the Dangme, this one God is expressed in their daily occurrences such as *Mau nge* (God exists), *Mau le ha a no* (it is God who gives), *Mau ji wa tsε* (God is our Father) and many expressions of such nature are given as names to people to show how active God is in their lives. *Mau* has no temple, shrine, sanctuary nor a place of worship among the people.

Again *Mau* has no priests, priestesses, prophets, prophetess nor its own servants. But this *Mau* is prominently commemorated and officially invoked during public worship and prayers. When the Dangme are offering public prayers, which is done by a priest of a deity,

<sup>123</sup> *Mawu* is the name of the Supreme Being among the Ewe speaking tribes. *Mawu* has an Ewe origin which means ‘the one who surpasses all, in wisdom, strength, might, glory, honour etc. *Mawu* is different from *etrɔ*, *vodu* etc. *Mawu* etymologically does not make any meaning in Dangme, the mother dialect of Krobo.

<sup>124</sup> J. Abedi-Boafo, *Dangme Nyaii: Classical and Idiomatic Dangme*. Accra: Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1980, p. 85. *Laosiada* has been spelt as ‘Lao Siada, and translated as ‘The Gracious Father; the Bountiful Giver’ *Laosiada* is an appellation used to qualify the name of the Supreme Being such as *Laosiada Nyingmo*, or *Laosenyingmo*.

<sup>125</sup> *Nyingmo* is found among the Dangme as the original name of God and *Nyingmo* is similar to the Ga name of God; *Nyɔɔmo*.

<sup>126</sup> J. Zimmermann, *A Grammatical Sketch of the Akra or Ga-Language and Some Specimens of it from the mouth of the Natives with Adan`me Appendix*. Stuttgart: J.F. Steinkopf, 1858. In this book *Mawu* is found as the name of God, may be because the Ga people also have *Mawu* in their vocabulary.



or a family head they mention the names of the objects of worship according to their supremacy.

The typical Dangme prayer pattern is hierarchical as shown below:

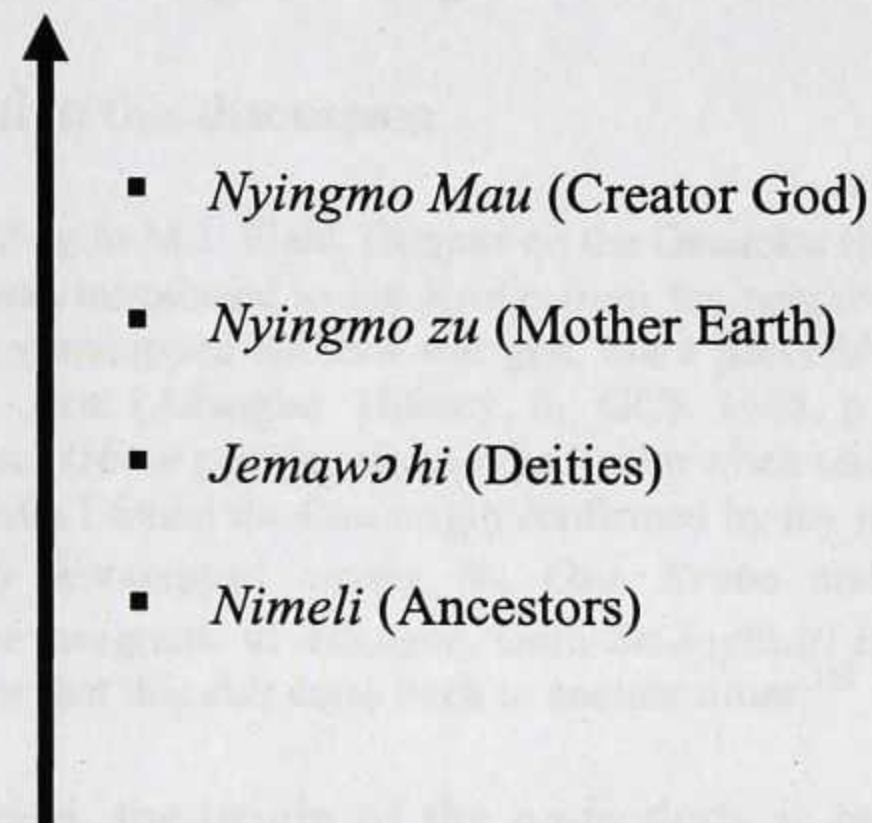


Figure 3.2 Hierarchical arrangement of prayer

After this address, *nibimi* (supplication, petition, protection) follows.

3.5.2 *Jemawɔhi*

Another religious phenomenon that is unique to the Dangme is the worship of *Jemawɔ*. These cannot be called fetish rather they are gods so to speak. *Jemawɔ* (singular) and *Jemawɔhi* (plural) can be described as supernatural forces. Field described them as powerful type of intelligent *wɔɣ*,<sup>127</sup> not specialized in his activities but practically omnipotent and omniscient. He comes and goes like the wind.<sup>128</sup> Etymologically, it may be ‘*jeme a wɔ*, which may mean the deities of this world. Huber explains the etymology as *dʒemi* (in the world) and *wɔ* (deity) as the meaning of guardian hence he concluded that *jemawɔ* can be translated as ‘guardians in the world.’ From the translations, deity or deities of this world sounds more appropriate compared to ‘guardians in the world as translated by Huber. The question about the origin of

<sup>127</sup> *Wɔɣ* and *dʒemawɔɣ* are after the *Ga* spellings among whom the study was conducted. It is written *wɔ* and *jemawɔ* with modern Dangme orthography. Hugo Huber, however spelt it *dʒemawɔi* (plural) and *dʒemawɔ* (singular) with old Dangme orthography.

<sup>128</sup> M.J. Field, *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People*. London: Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 4.



the *jemawɔ hi*, almost always receives one response as God gave them to the Dangme to worship.

One prominent *jemawɔ* among the Dangme is the *Nadu* cult. Huber's comment on its origin will prove meaningful in this discussion;

According to M.J. Field, (Report on the Osudoku state. Ms 1939, p. 9) *Nadu* was introduced to the Krobo from the neighbouring Osu, where he was worshipped not as a war god, but a peaceful agricultural deity. N.A.A. Azu, (Adangbe History, in: GCR 1928, p.23) maintains that the Accra *Gbese* people left it to the Krobo when separating from them. Personally I found the Osu origin confirmed by my informants. *Nadu* is actually worshipped among *Sɛ, Osu, Krobo* and also among the *Adangme* emigrants at *Adangbe, Gati, Sɛ-Zogbedji* in Togoland, which suggests that this cult dates back to ancient times.<sup>129</sup>

From the above sources, the origin of the *nadu* deity is not certain but may be as old as the people's origin. Its status changed with the passage of time from a fertility deity to war god.

*Nadu* and other *jemawɔhi* have now given way to Christianity.

### 3.5.3 The Ancestral Cult

Prominent to the religious life of the Dangme is the ancestral cult (the veneration of the dead). Dangme as an African society is made up of the unborn, the living and the dead; however spiritual power rests upon the dead –*Ancestors*. "They exercise control over the living; all life exists under their surveillance. They are treated with awe, fear, reverence, respect, veneration, occasionally worship."<sup>130</sup> The Dangme believe that in the passage to death, God the Almighty grants special power to the living-dead (ancestors) for the sake of their families on earth. With ~~this power~~, the ancestors can mediate between God and the people of their families; thus the living and the unborn. They are believed to possess the power to bless and curse and they are the unseen hosts in every African home. Gyekye adduces that

<sup>129</sup> Huber, *The Krobo: Traditional Social and Religious Life of a West African People*, p. 236-footnote 2

<sup>130</sup> D. B. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 119.



to be an ancestor one must qualify as a “moral paragon”<sup>131</sup> and not necessarily having children as some writers suggested.

In the public prayer of the Dangme, ancestors are the third in the hierarchy of prayer and are immortalized by giving their names to new born family members. They believe that once a child is given an ancestor's name, the child possessed the spirit of the person. Therefore, family members who have been corrupt, lazy, immoral, wicked and involved in other social vices die with their names.

#### 3.5.4 Dangme Priesthood

Priesthood has the most enduring influence on the Dangme culture and tradition because it engrains religion into social institutions. The priest or the priestess is the servant of the deity, sometimes as the one who has the power to ascertain the wishes of the divine. They are the servants of the gods and the interpreters of the will of the gods to the people<sup>132</sup>. The priest or priestess in his or her capacity as the bridge builder between the deity and the community can claim to have power to open and to shut the channels of divine power. Finally, the priest or the priestesses share in the power and privileges of divinity because of their roles as those whose sacrifices, maintain social and cosmic order. Sometimes, the power that this role confers can be constructed as independent source of priestly power in the form of mystical power that resides in the priest.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>131</sup> K. Gyekye, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*. Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company, 1996, p. 36.

<sup>132</sup> Field, *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People*. London: Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 4.

<sup>133</sup> Akrong, ‘Religion and Traditional Leadership in Ghana’ in Irene K. Odotei and Albert K. Awedoba (Eds.) *Chieftaincy in Ghana: Culture, Governance and Development*, p. 195.



### 3.5.5 The Priestly Office

The Dangme priesthood is a divine calling by the *jemawɔ* and the candidate is subjected through holistic training by the *Laabia*,<sup>134</sup> who knows all about the religious institution of that *jemawɔ*. The position can be vacant for years until the *jemawɔ* finds someone suitable to be the priest or priestess. The marks of the priestly office carry both ritual and symbolic authority. The priest or the priestess is the custodian of the sacred traditions and the master of the religious activities such as rituals, sacred laws, taboos and social sanity. It is the priestly office that creates the rules of social organisation, which regulates society. Their duties include; offering sacrifices, communal prayers, transmits votive, binds the society to the *jemawɔ*. The *Wɔ nɔ*<sup>135</sup> functions as the intermediaries between their communities and the deities into whose service they have been called<sup>136</sup>. The Dangme priests and priestess identify themselves by wearing black and white beads on strings on their wrists and ankles, and mystic cord *lalakpa*, made from bindweed *nyinyila*, around their neck. The bindweed has powerful sanctification and protective powers against uncleanness and epidemic diseases.

The black and white on the wrists and ankles of the priests and priestesses is not simply an ornament but also a symbol cautioning the priests and priestesses that there are good and bad people in every state, the wearer must be patient in dealing with the individual members in the state. The white symbolizes good and kind people and the black, just the opposite.<sup>137</sup> The

<sup>134</sup> The *Laabia* is the shrine assistant who knows well the rudiments of the *jemawɔ*.

<sup>135</sup> *Wɔnɔ* – the priest, and *Wɔ yo* – the priestess. Etymologically, it is *wɔ nɔ hye lo*, which is translated, the overseer of the deity. This must not be confused with *wɔtse*, a person who owns and service his personal fetish for his own socio-economic gains.

<sup>136</sup> J.D.Ekem, *Priesthood in Context: A Study of Priesthood in Some Christian and Pimal Communities of Ghana and its Relevance for Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretation*. Accra: SonLife Press, 2008, p. 53.

<sup>137</sup> M.E.Dakubu, ed. *Dangme and Klama Proverbs Part 1*. Collected and Translated by T.N.N Accam. Legon: Institute of African Studies, 1972, p. i.



priests, priestesses and *Laabia* are collectively called *Jemeli* and they also wear *la*<sup>138</sup> around the their wrist. They do not involve themselves in witchcraft practices, sorcery, soothsaying, divination, or magic. They are the standard of morality, ethically balanced, and religiously upright.

### 3.6 The Dangme Language

Language can be described as a means of social communication between human beings, through conventional but arbitrary associations linking meaning with sounds and tone groups to form speech on the one hand, and on the other hand, linking meaning with signs, letters, words, phrases, sentences in writing and eventually printing.<sup>139</sup> Language is the first index of a people's culture, and the first sign to inform a person that he/she is a stranger, when the immediate linguistic environment changes and he/she becomes handicapped. The more a people's language spreads, the more their culture spreads. People learn languages so that they can interact with a culture and be accepted by that culture. This implies that language is a system of words and speech that people of a particular culture use to communicate meaningfully among themselves.

There are many languages in the world, but out of these, there is only one very important language in the life of a person that is significant to the growth and development of a people. It is noteworthy that language, spoken or written, in conjunction with other means of human communication, is crucial for human developments<sup>140</sup>. This all important language is the

<sup>138</sup> *La* is a symbol of three beads (*tovi*, *nyoli* and *kali*) put together on a raffia palm string (*hlawe kpa*) that is put on the wrist of infants to identify them as Dangme during the exodus and even to this present day. It is also by priests and priestesses to identify themselves as *La li*.

<sup>139</sup> R. F. Amonoo, 'Language and Nationhood: Reflection on Language Situations with Particular Reference to Ghana'. *The J.B.Danquah Memorial Lectures Series 19 February 1986*. Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1989, p. 4.

<sup>140</sup> Amonoo, 'Language and Nationhood, p. 4.



Mother-tongue<sup>141</sup> and so is the issue of the Dangme language to the development of Dangme people. Amonoo opines that “the very first language we master, the mother tongue, is of capital importance; often it is the language we know and love best, the medium of our inmost feelings and thoughts. The mother tongue thus constitutes the deepest and most pervasive linguistic layer.”<sup>142</sup> It may be that due to this reason, people who speak the same dialect and the same accent, have a strong force of kindred linguistic traits.

The Dangme language is part of the *Kwa group of languages*. Dangme language is closely related to the Ga.<sup>143</sup> Reindorf, on his part sees the Dangme language as the mother of the Ga language. He writes “...thence to the Volta where were situated the districts of the Les, speaking Adangme, the mother dialect of the Ga.”<sup>144</sup> Ga and Dangme are sometimes seen as one single language. There are many similarities in the rudiment vocabularies, yet they differ in grammar, particularly verb phrases. Dangme is the aboriginal language spoken by the people called the Dangme<sup>145</sup> or the *La li*. The Dangme language like most African languages has three tones; low, mid and high and meanings to words are derived from these tones.

The Dangme's thoughts and emotions are best expressed in the Dangme language since it is part of his/her personality and physical appearance. The Dangme language is the culture of the Dangme and since God accepts all cultures, God accepts the Dangme language. It is comforting for the Dangme to read “that God speaks all languages, gives all languages a theological significance. Hebrew and Aramaic are not God's “linguistic favourites”. God

<sup>141</sup> The issue of the Mother-tongue has been mentioned in the earlier chapters. See page ....

<sup>142</sup> Amonoo, ‘Language and Nationhood’, p. 6.

<sup>143</sup> Kropp Dakubu, ‘A Survey of Borrowed Words in Dangme’. in *Transactions of the Linguistic Circle of Accra: Papers in Ghanaian Linguistics. Research Review Supplement No. 4*. Legon: I.A.S. University of Ghana. March 1973, p. 81.

<sup>144</sup> Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.*, p. 23.

<sup>145</sup> The Dangme tribes are Shai, Kpone, Krobo (Manya and Yilo), Osudoku, Ada, Prampram and Ningo. The people of Kpone speak Ga more than their aboriginal language, Dangme. This abnormality is being resolved as Dangme is now being taught in schools as a subject. The people of Agotime in the Volta Region are Dangme speaking people who live in the Volta region.



could have chosen any of the languages of the world to communicate the Christ-event. God would have chosen Dangme if Jesus were born in the Dangme culture.”<sup>146</sup>

### 3.6.1 The Development of Dangme into Biblical and Instructional language

The earliest literary work to be done in the Dangme language was after orthography was developed for the Ga language. The Basel missionaries also did some translation works and other literary productions; an example is the book of the Prophet Jonah. But those materials were not made available to the education of the Dangme; hence such materials were only mentioned in later materials.<sup>147</sup> For obvious reasons, the Ga orthography was modified by Carl C. Reindorf in 1857 to write the following hymn in the Dangme language:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Kpakpa be zugba ne no;<br>dsahe ne waho ne wagu xyom bloo no;<br>lolo ne wana hedsom tseo!<br>Wane nona he ne xie, xyom dsi watseo-mao:<br>Nyeha waho | 2. Xyom waya, he xyom waya ne wabloo no;<br>nihi ne wane xara he, ledse ke ene, pi<br>Xieme! Xieme wana no da;<br>nyeha watso waya xyom<br>ledse dsom ne! <sup>148</sup> |
|--|--|

Later in the 1920s onwards, the Dangme produced many manuscripts for the development of the language. Some of these manuscripts were later published into books, while others remained as manuscripts. It is even said that Enoch Azu translated the whole Bible into Dangme and B. B. Puplampu also translated the Liturgy of the Presbyterian Ga Hymn Book, as well as several original religious poems which were written to be sung to popular hymn tunes into Dangme. It is worthy of note that these earlier writers used the Ga and other orthographies to suit their own ideologies of translating and the writing of the language. For instance people were writing Adangme as *Adangbe*, *Adanɛ*, and *Adanme*. To bring sanity into the Dangme orthography, D. A. Puplampu in the 1940s suggested an orthography which

<sup>146</sup> J. E.T.Kuwornu-Adjaotor, 'Patronage and Usage of the Mother-Tongue Bibles in Kumasi, Ghana'. Prime Journal of Social Science (PJSS). Vol.2 (6) November 2012, p. 126.

<sup>147</sup> 'Preface' in *Dangme Ngmami Bɔ: The Writing of Dangme*. Accra: Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1990, p. v

<sup>148</sup> *Lala Wolo ha Kristofoi Asafo ni yo Ga ke Adanme sikpon le no le*. Accra: Presbyterian Book Depot, 1965, p. 241-242.



included the use of c, j, ng, to replace tf, dz, and ŋ in the Ga characters. His proposal was not agreed upon. Fortunately, Dangme was among the eleven government-sponsored national languages, hence the Institute of African Studies; Legon was invited to advice on Ga and Dangme orthography. Amonoo writes that the Dangme orthography was devised in 1952<sup>149</sup> and the representatives of Institute of African Studies Legon, the Bureau of Ghana Languages and the Dangme Bible Translation Committee met in 1969 and decided on the set rules of spellings.<sup>150</sup>

A standardization Committee was appointed by the Bureau of Ghana Languages in 1974 to review the existing orthography, and to prepare an instructional and biblical Dangme that will be understandable to all people from the eight Dangme speaking areas. The Committee's work brought uniformity in the teaching of Dangme as an approved Ghanaian language for schools in the Dangme speaking areas in Ghana.

### 3.6.2 Dangme Writing System

The standardization committee came up with a writing format, putting into consideration the dialectal differences in the Dangme language. They proposed thirty single and combined letters forming the Dangme alphabet and written in the Latin script. Tones and nasalisation are normally not written. The Dangme alphabets use upper case and lower case and they are:

Upper case:

A B D E & F G GB H I J K KP L M N NG NGM NY O ɔ P S T TS U V

W Y Z

<sup>149</sup> Amonoo, 'Language and Nationhood: Reflection on Language Situations with Particular Reference to Ghana'. *The J.B.Danquah Memorial Lectures Series 19 February 1986*. Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1989, p. 51.

<sup>150</sup> 'Preface' in *Dangme Ngmami Bɔ: The Writing of Dangme*. Accra: Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1990, p. vi



Lower case:

a b d e ε f g gb h i j k kp l m n ng ngm ny o ɔ p s t ts u v w y z

It is worthy of note that words with Rr, SH sh and Xx sounds are foreign to Dangme.

/l/ has allophones [l] and [r] and /j/ has an allophone [ʒ]

Orthographic and phonemic correspondences are as follows:

j - /dʒ/, ng - /ŋ/, ngm - /ŋm/, ny - /ɲ/, ts - /tʃ/, y - /j/, ε - /ɛ/, ɔ - /ɔ/

Consonantal sounds: Dangme has seventeen single consonants and six clusters.

Single: B b, D d, F f, G g, H h, J j, K k, L l, M m, N n, P p, S s, T t, V v, W w, Y y, Z z

Cluster: GB gb, KP kp, NG ng, NGM ngm, NY ny, TS ts

Vowel sounds: Dangme has seven oral vowel sounds and five nasal vowel sounds.

Oral vowel sounds: a, e, ε, i, o, ɔ, u,

Nasal vowel sounds: ã, ẽ, ĩ, õ, ù

This the current state of Dangme orthography.<sup>151</sup>

### 3.7 Emergence of Christianity

Dangmeland as early as the arrival of the first batch Basel missionaries in December 1828, also prepared and received them. The three Germans and a Swiss, after staying at Osu for some months, relocated to Ningo. Unfortunately three of them died at Ningo within five months leaving only one who sought refuge in the Castle but he did not live beyond 1832.<sup>152</sup>

In 1832, a second batch of three was fortunate to have one survivor, Andreas Riis, who in 1835, moved out of Accra coast to settle in Akropong-Akwapim.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>151</sup> *Dangme Ngmami b4*, Accra: Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1990, p. 9.

<sup>152</sup> F. Agyemang, *Our Presbyterian Heritage*. Accra: Presbyterian Press, 2006, p. 9. See also N. Smith, *The Presbyterian Church of Ghana 1835 – 1960: A Younger Church in a Changing Society*, p. 29.

<sup>153</sup> D.N.A. Kpobi, *Mission in Ghana: The Ecumenical Heritage*. Accra: Asempa Publishers, 2008, p. 75.



The Krobo first encounter with Andreas Riis, the Basel missionary was during the time of Akwapim-Krobo war in 1835. The Danish Governor F. S. Morck,<sup>154</sup> alarmed at the spread of English influence in the eastern area of the Gold Coast, sought to enforce Danish hegemony over the Akwapim and Krobo states.<sup>155</sup> His interference in the tribal affairs of Krobo and Akwapim antagonized both tribes and occasioned great turmoil and bloody civil strife in Akwapim.<sup>156</sup> Viet Arlt writes that "the Basel missionaries first visited Krobo region in December 1835 and twenty years later made Odumase-Krobo an outpost run by two catechists; before establishing a fully fledged mission station in 1857."<sup>157</sup> Smith states that around "December 1837, Riis and Murdter, undeterred, made two extensive exploratory journeys to the Shai hills through Krobo'. Yilo Krobo had been visited by Andreas Riis in 1838, after the chief<sup>158</sup> of Yilo had given a son to the Methodist school at Accra. When this son died, the chief became distrustful of Christianity."<sup>159</sup> It was in 1859, when the Odumase (Manya Krobo) opened an outstation at Sra (Yilo Krobo), the chief's village. The Krobo were the first among the Dangme to have a missionary station established by the Basel missionaries.

The Methodist, moving along the coastal areas of Dangmeland, had a school established in Prampram and in 1847, wanted to hand it over to the Basel Mission. 'But in 1851, the Basel Mission declined, leaving the Coast to the Methodist, which maintained schools at Prampram, Ningo and Pony'. Ada on the other hand had Danish influence since 1780 and therefore became Port for Krobo trade. In 1867, a combined mission and mission-trading station was opened at Ada Foah.

<sup>154</sup> Frederick Sigfred Morck, was the Danish Governor who took charge of the Gold Coast between January 1835. He died on March 18, 1839.

<sup>155</sup> Smith, *The Presbyterian Church of Ghana 1835 – 1960: A Younger Church in a Changing Society*, p. 31.

<sup>156</sup> H. Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*. Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1967, p. 100

<sup>157</sup> V. Arlt, *Christianity, Imperialism, and Culture: The Expulsion of the Two Krobo States C.1830-1930*. Basel: Copy Quick, 2005, p. 14.

<sup>158</sup> The name of the then chief of Yilo Krobo was Nene Ologo Patu.

<sup>159</sup> Debrunner, *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, p. 125.



### 3.8 Dangme and Bible Translations

Bible translation is the process of converting literary text from an original source through a medium into a targeted source. It involves trans-mediation; thus the transfer from one medium to another. That is from oral text to a written text, from written text to a painted text, from a painted text to and audio-visual text, from one script to another. The Bible was originally recorded in Hebrew and Aramaic for the First Testament and Greek for the second Testament. 'Any translation art involves a lesser or greater quantity of deletion, distortion, generalization, specification or equivalence between the source text and the target text'. Bible translation is a bridge between two cultures; the sending culture and the receiving culture. Christianity is unknowingly founded on the foundation of Bible translation into cultures though not wholly recognized. Christianity exists as a translation of a culture into a culture and this make Christianity to be indebted to *Translations*.<sup>160</sup> Since translation bridges a source culture and a recipient culture, it is appropriate that the two cultures are identified with each other in principle and practice. This then is the essence of importing one culture into another meaningfully. In translating the Bible into Dangme, the Hebrew culture and the Greco-Roman cultures must be identified with Dangme culture.

The history of translation of the Bible into Dangme cannot be started without mentioning the indefatigable effort of J. Zimmermann and the indigenous translators. They produced the first full Ga Bible, published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1866.<sup>161</sup> Since Dangme and Ga are closely related, there ~~has not been~~ much effort in translating the books of the Bible into Dangme. The earliest record on Bible translation into Dangme was the work of Enoch Azu. It is on record that he translated the whole Bible into the Dangme language, but

<sup>160</sup> J. C. Loba-Mkole, 'History and Theory of Scripture Translations' in *Hervormde Teologiese Studies*. Herv. teol.stud. vol.64 no.1 Pretoria Jan.-Mar. 2008. P 9-22. He adduces that translation is whatever a society recognises as such, to the extent that everything can be called translation,'p. 10.

<sup>161</sup> J.D.K. Ekem, *Early Scriptures of the Gold Coast (Ghana): The Historical, Linguistic and Theological Settings of Ga, Twi, Mfantse, and Ewe Bibles*. Brooklands: St Jerome Publishing, 2011, p. 39.



the work remained in the manuscript form and has not been exposed to the public.<sup>162</sup> Many other single books of the Bible were published in Dangme until 1977, when the United Bible Societies published the New Testament in Dangme called *Somi He ɔ*. The *Somi He ɔ*, has been the only Bible for the Dangme for twenty years until in 1997, when the *Wami Munyu ɔ kɛ La amɛ* (Dangme New Testament and Psalms) were translated and published by international Bible Society. These herald the translation of the whole Bible into the Dangme language in 1999 and it is called *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ* - The Holy Writing. The question is, has the Dangme been identified with the translation?

### 3.8.1 The Task of Bible Translation

Bible translation and publishing is a laborious and meticulous process which takes between twelve to fifteen years by a team of three full time translators. The services of a review team between ten to twelve people are engaged to review the work. The translation is normally done from the source languages – Hebrew and Greek languages. The translation is supervised by a Translation Consultant and goes through the process of keyboarding and thorough manuscript examination.<sup>163</sup>

### 3.9 Conclusion

In sum, the chapter attempted to illustrate the origin of the Dangme from their aboriginal home to their present places of abode. It also discussed the worldview, cultural heritage and some institutions of the Dangme people. The development of Dangme language into

<sup>162</sup> In the course of this study, we were told that the translation work done by Enoch Azu is still with the Azu family of Odumase-Krobo. When we approached the family, we were told the work has been sent to the Bible House, Accra. We are yet to go and find out from the Bible House.

<sup>163</sup> 'The Bible Society of Ghana: Making the Holy Scriptures Available in a Language you can understand and at a Price You can afford.' Accra: Wadso, p. 5.



instructional language, the system of writing was also considered in this chapter. The next chapter will analyse and discuss data from the field.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### FIELD FINDINGS: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the Dangme as a people and the exodus to their present place of abode. Issues such as the development of their language and rulership were also delved into. This current chapter examines and analyses data collected from the eight dialectal areas (Ada, Ningo, Prampram, Kpone, Shai, Yilo Krobo, Manya Krobo and Osudoku) forming Dangme State. In order to ascertain that the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀ ɔ* (Dangme Bible) contained some translation challenges that affect reading and interpretation in the Pentateuch of the Dangme Bible.

#### 4.1 Research Question

The main question on which the research is based is:

What are some of the challenges confronting the Dangme reader when reading the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀ ɔ*, in the face of culture, tradition, language and theology?

#### 4.2 Data Collection Procedure

The population was made up of Dangme Christians from all the 'strands of Christianity'<sup>164</sup> from the dialectal areas of Dangmeland, with the exception of New Religious Movements

<sup>164</sup>Ghanaian Christianity can be categorized into five strands namely: (1) Historical or Mainline Churches example; Presbyterian Church of Ghana, The Methodist Church Ghana, The Roman Catholic Church, The Anglican Church etc. (2) African Indigenous/independent Churches: Saviour Church, Divine Healers Church, MDCC etc. (3) Classical Pentecostals: Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God, Christ Apostolic Church, the Apostolic Church of Ghana etc. (4) Charismatics/ Neo-Pentecostals: International Central Gospel Church, Action Faith International, Royal House Chapel International etc. (5) Prophetic Ministry. New Religious Movements such as Jehovah Witness, Latter Day Saints, etc were not included.



(NRMs). This population included the clergy, lay preachers and leaders, theologians, and Bible readers.

A sample size of five hundred and twenty-three Christians, randomly selected from churches in Dangmeland responded to the questionnaire over a period of five months. Again twenty-seven interviews were conducted including observations in churches and study cells. The service of a Research Assistant<sup>165</sup> was engaged.

#### 4.2.1 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study was designed by the researcher after a pilot survey was done at Big Ada, Odumase Krobo and Somanya with twenty people. The final questionnaire comprised twenty-two objective and three subjective questions to suit the study (please see sample of questionnaire in Appendix i). Questions 1-4 sought to find out the Bio-data of the respondents. Questions 5-15 are intended to ascertain if the respondents are Dangme-Christians and read the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀ ɔ* (Dangme Bible). Question 16 a, b, c, d, and e solicit respondents' views on the translation and usage of some selected Pentateuchal texts. Question 17 was intended to find out the Dangme aboriginal name of the Creator God. The pieces of questionnaire were distributed together with the following instructions: "This questionnaire is to enable the researcher collect data on 'Some Translation Challenges that Affect Reading and Interpretation in the Pentateuch of the Dangme Bible.' Your responses will be used for the purposes of educational research only. Any information given will be treated with maximum confidentiality. Please respond to the questions by writing and ticking the appropriate spaces in the boxes provided as applicable." The questionnaire bears the name of the researcher and the thesis supervisor at the tail end.

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<sup>165</sup> See Appendix III for the profile of the Research Assistant



### 4.2.2 Interviews and Study Cells

In all, twenty-seven people were interviewed and four study cells<sup>166</sup> with the researcher facilitating the discussions of the issues forming the basis of this thesis.

### 4.3 Research Findings: Interviews and Interviewees

Translation of the whole Bible into Dangme was started in 1979 by J.M.T. Dodoo, one of the founding fathers of Ada Training College, and C.W. Doku, Emile Populampo, and S.T. Akunor, they were retired Educationists. When their ages were advanced, Escobar D. Leiku<sup>167</sup> was added to the team and later, Gloria D. Kitcher<sup>168</sup> was also added to the Team. The Bible Translations Consultant at the time was Gilbert Ansreh and when he retired, J.D.K. Ekem, took over and supervised through to the launching of the Dangme Bible.

It was discovered from the interviews that the Translators being aboriginal Dangme people without any exposure to the Biblical languages, relied on sources such as Translation Guides, Bible Helps and other various translations of the Bible (English versions and earlier Ghanaian language translations).

The informant again explained that they had challenge with the constitution of the Review Committee. He explained that, the Review Committee should have been a representation of the dialects forming the Dangme language, but this was not possible. "In fact, there was no review committee."<sup>169</sup> The work was handed over to the Bible Society of Ghana on December 6, 1996.<sup>170</sup>

<sup>166</sup> A study cell is a small group of individuals (between 4 – 8 Dangme Christians) of diverse backgrounds (age, education, etc) put together to discuss the issues raised in the research with the researcher being the facilitator. The study cells were formed at Adormeh, Odumase-Krobo, Big Ada and Ningo.

<sup>167</sup> E. D. Leiku was the researcher's informant on the history of the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀ ɔ* (Dangme Bible)

<sup>168</sup> G. D. Kitcher is now (Gloria D. Kitcher-Asare) and E. D. Leiku are the only surviving members of the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀ ɔ* translating team.

<sup>169</sup> E. D. Leiku was the researcher's informant.

<sup>170</sup> E. D. Leiku, interview by Tetteh Fiorgbor, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Asesewa District office, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.



One of the major problems in the translation works of the various versions of the Dangme Bibles (*Somi He ɔ*, *Wami Munyu ɔ* and *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ*) is inconsistency, which the informant described in the following words ‘the work lacks synchronisation’. For instance, the translation of *frankincense and myrrh*, the three versions, have different renderings:

Table 4.1: Some inconsistencies in the Dangme translations of the Bible.

No	Version	Year and Publisher	Frankincense	Myrrh
1.	<i>Somi He ɔ</i>	UBS-BSG 1977	<i>Mimɛ</i>	<i>mire</i>
2.	<i>Wami Munyu ɔ</i>	IBS 1997	<i>La su ku womi tsopa</i>	<i>Nu je via</i>
3.	<i>Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ (Somi He ɔ)</i>	UBS-BSG 1999	<i>Mimɛ</i>	<i>mire</i>
4.	<i>Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ (Somi Momo ɔ)</i>		<i>Tsopa kɛ e he via/ Mimɛ</i>	<i>Mimɛ</i>
5.	Original Dangme name	-	<i>Ohɛ</i>	<i>Mimɛ</i>

In the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ*, it can be observed that frankincense and myrrh have been translated differently with even mix-ups.

From the interviews and study cells, it is concluded that the translation of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu ɔ* lacks synchronisation.



### 4.3.1 General Opinions of Interviewees and Study Cells

**Question 1. What do you think are some of the problems we might encounter when a biblical text is not well translated?**

In general, the interviewees and the study cells did not mince words saying that the intended message to the recipients becomes distorted hence it will not give the people the right meaning and if detected, the people will develop negative attitude to the translation. Narh mentioned that, 'the Bible is God speaking to His people and God cannot change His word'<sup>171</sup>!

**Question 2. Why should Bible translation be a hermeneutical enterprise that demand features such as accuracy, clarity and naturalness?**

Hermeneutics is the science needed to interpret the Bible and these features will not make the translators to impose their mindsets in the translation of the Bible. It was concluded that since 'Bible translation affects the social and religious life of the users the translation should send the right signals.'<sup>172</sup>

**Question 3. What are some of the translation challenges you have noted in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀* ɔ?**

Most of the interviewees have not taken the pain to read the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀* ɔ, to note down translation problems, others are of the opinion that what they might be calling problems may be acceptable in the other dialects of the language hence one must consult all eight dialects forming the Dangme language before such problems can come up.

<sup>171</sup> Rev. Dr. Stephen Ohipeni Narh, interview by Tetteh Fiorgbor, Assemblies of God Mission House, Odumase near Presby cemetery, 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2014.

<sup>172</sup> Rev. Emmanuel Tetteh Terkpertey, interview by Tetteh Fiorgbor, Presbyterian Church of Ghana Manse 3, Odumase-Krobo, 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.



**Question 4. What translation problems do you envisage with the underline phrases/words in the following biblical texts?**

The reponse for this question is not different from the questionnaire so it will be analysed together.

**Question 5. What are some of the challenges that confront the Dangme reader when reading the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* ɔ, in the face of culture, tradition, language and theology?**

The translated Bible should speak to the cultural issues of the Dangme and be the standard of judgement in that it must have the final say on cultural issues. Traditionally if the translation of grain offering in Leviticus 2:1 is translated as *ngma*, then it authenticates the 'Ngmayemi festival as biblical'<sup>173</sup>. Djangmah mentioned that linguistic challenge in the translation of the Bible always creates a gap between the source language and the receptive language. It is very difficult to assess this since 'we' do not have an idea about the source language and culture.<sup>174</sup>

**Question 6. How does the Dangme call God?**

It was established that the aboriginal name of God cannot be traced since the aboriginal home of the Dangme is not factual. But many endorsed *Nyingmo* and *Mau* as the Dangme name of God. With *Loasiada*, *Opemɛ*, *Jetsɛ*, *Blema Tɛsa* and *OdeoƆeɔ* as appellations. On the issue of *mawuhi*, *mawu ɔmɛ* and general pluralisation of the name of God, they said that is not Dangme. Aminarh stated that '*ke tsapi Mawu ɔ lɛɛ jemawɔ aloo wɔ!*' [If it is not God, then it

<sup>173</sup> Hon David Sackitey Asare, interview by Tetteh Fiorgbor, Matse wem Odumase-Krobo, 20<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.

<sup>174</sup> Rev. E.F.K. Djangmah, interview by Tetteh Fiorgbor, Presbyterian Church of Ghana Manse, Manyakpongur, 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014.



is a natural deity or handy-craft]. It is inappropriate to pluralize God and that is not the theology of the Dangme.

#### 4.4 The Respondents to the Questionnaire

The table below represents basic information about gender, educational background and age of respondents. The interpretation and analysis of the tabulated information is presented beneath.

Table 4:2 Basic Information of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	284	54.3
Female	239	45.7
Total	523	100
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
Tertiary	224	42.3
SHS/O/A-Level	180	34.8
JHS/MDS	119	22.9
Total	523	100
<b>AGE</b>		
18- 30	100	19.1
31-40	203	38.8
41-50	134	25.6
51-60	62	11.9
61 & above	24	4.6
Total	523	100

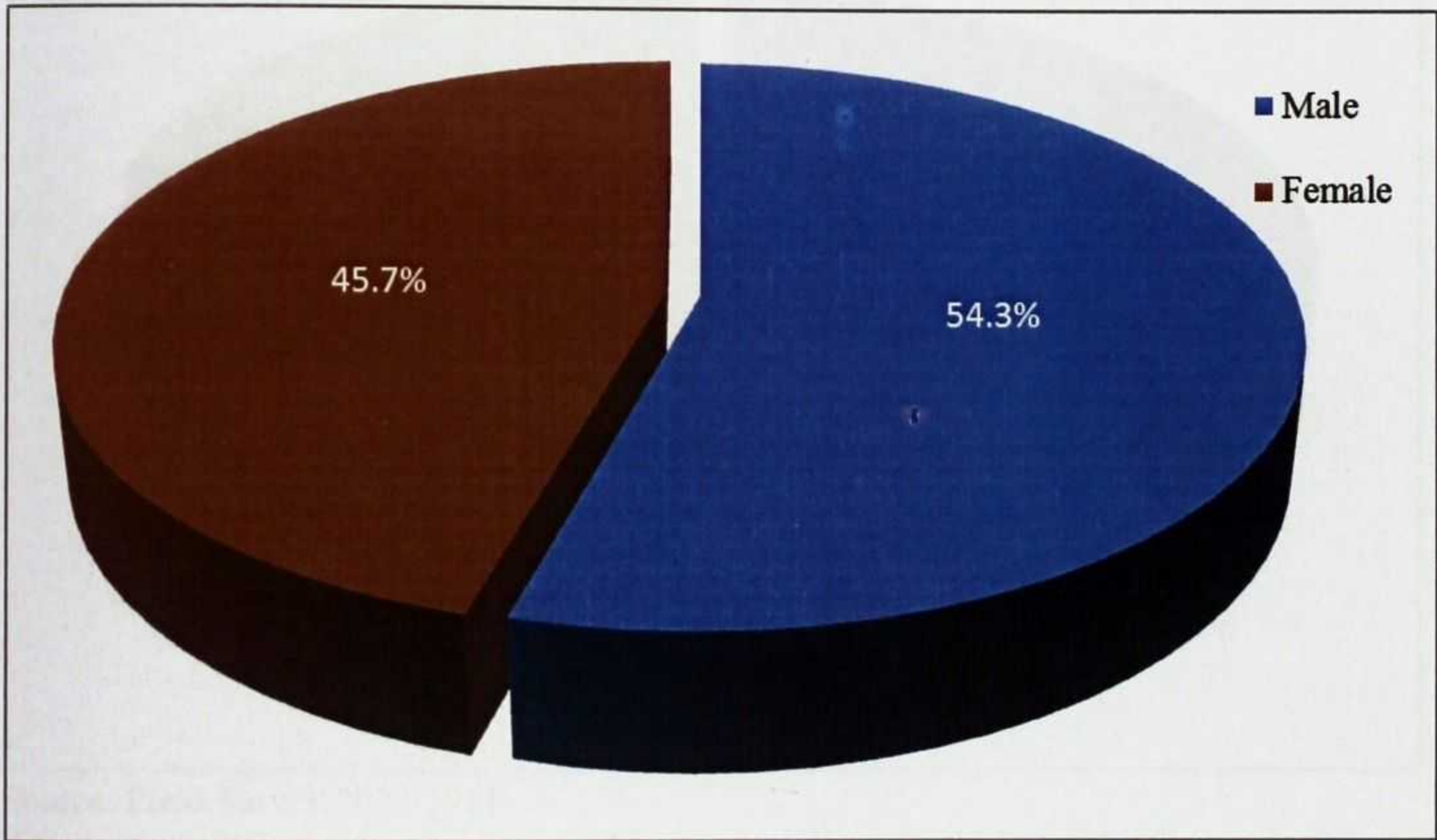


Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

4.4.1 Gender of Respondents

From Table 4:2 above, the gender distribution of respondents (Dangme Christians from the dialectal areas) is pictorially represented in the pie chart below.

Figure 4.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

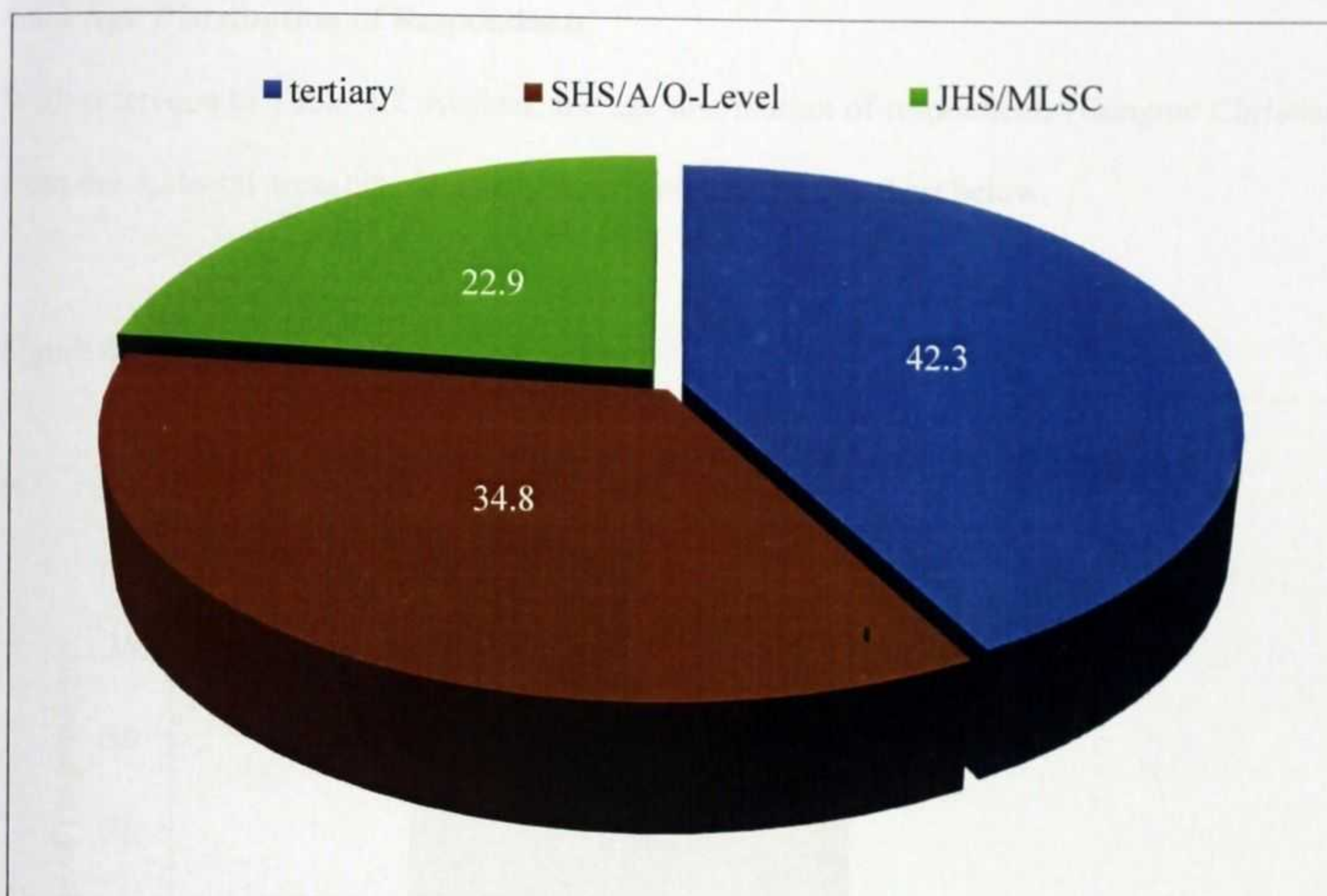
This pictorial representation of gender distribution of respondents shows the percentage of male and female respondents across the Dangme dialectal areas. The selected respondents were Dangme Christians, both males and females totalling five hundred and twenty-three (523) representing 100%. The males constituted two hundred and eighty-four (284) representing 54.3% and the females constituted two hundred and thirty-nine (239), representing 45.7%. The variance is attributed to the random sampling of Church Leaders, Pastors/Ministers, and Presbyters. Most of the Church leaders are males hence the variance.



#### 4.4.2 Educational Background of Respondents

The educational background distribution of respondents (Dangme Christians from the dialectal areas) is pictorially represented in the pie chart below;

Figure 4.2: Educational background distribution of Respondent



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

This was done as a means of ascertaining the Educational background distribution or the level of formal education of respondents (Dangme Christians from the dialectal areas) that were selected for the study. In all, two hundred and twenty-four (224) respondents representing 42.3% have Tertiary Education (Training Colleges, Polytechnics and Universities). One hundred and eighty (180) respondents, representing 34.8% have Secondary Education (Advance Level, Ordinary Level, Senior High, Vocational and Technical Education) and one hundred and nineteen (119) have Basic Education or the erstwhile Middle School Education,

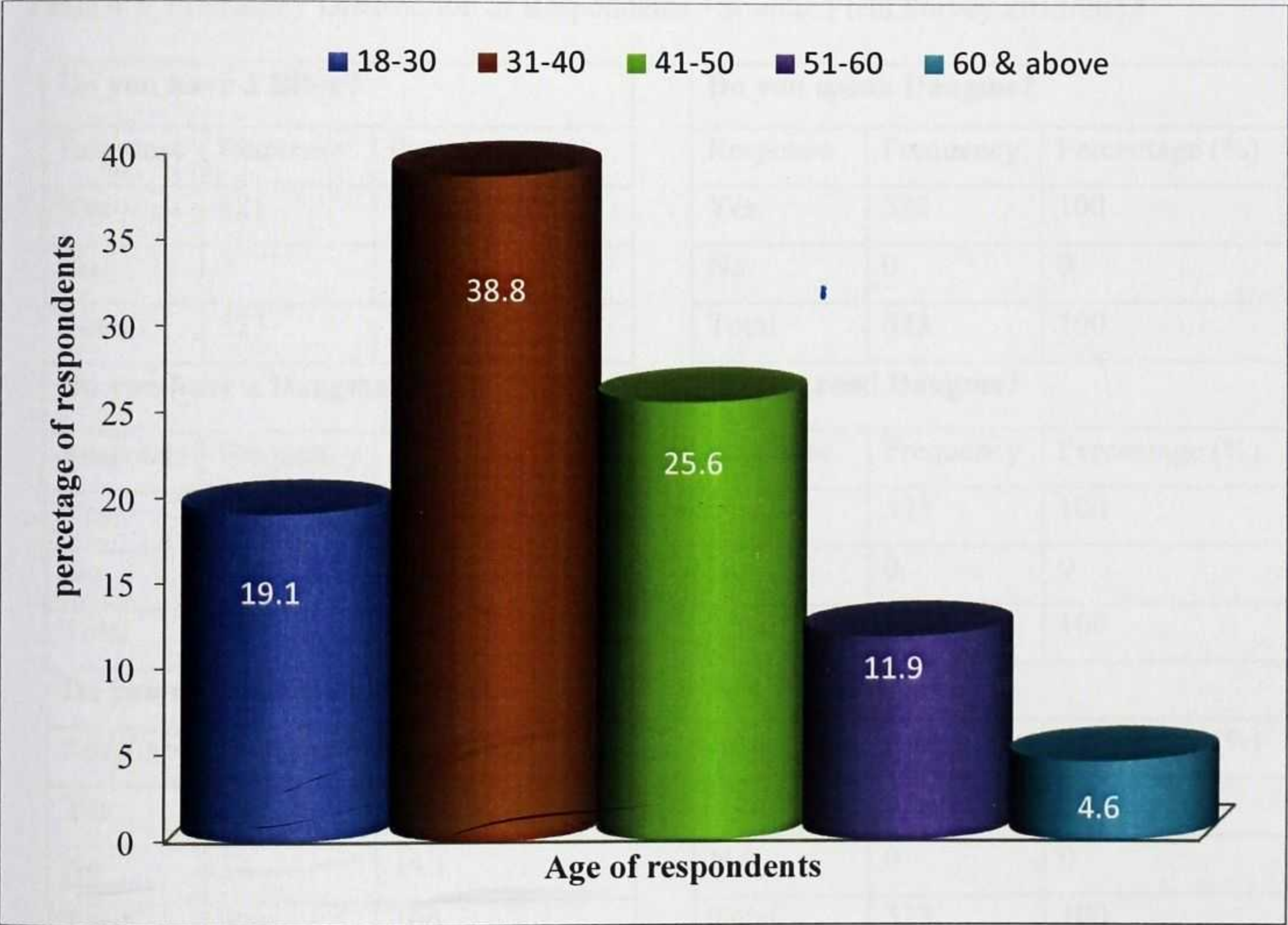


and this represents 22.9% of the total respondents. The variation may be due to the involvement of the clergy and other church officials being the core of the respondents.

4.4.3 Age Distribution of Respondents

With reference to Table 4.2 overleaf, the age distribution of respondents (Dangme Christians from the dialectal areas) is pictorially represented in the bar chart below;

Figure 4.3: Age Distribution of Respondents



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

In the case of the age distribution of respondents, the respondents were grouped into five categories. That is 18- 30, 31- 40, 41- 50, 51- 60 and 61+ (61 years and above). It is observed



that majority of the respondents were between 31- 40 years, numbering two hundred and three (203), representing 38.8% of the total respondents. The respondents between age 41-50 years were one hundred and thirty-four (134), representing 25.6%; while the age bracket between 18-30 years were one hundred (100), forming 19.1%. Age 51- 60years were sixty-two (62) representing 11.9% and respondents from age sixty-one years and above were twenty-four (24), representing 4.6% of the respondents. In fact, there were many people who fall within the 60+ years in the churches but since they could not read, they could not take part in the survey.

#### 4.5 Frequency Distribution Tables

Table 4.3: Frequency Distribution of Respondents - Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

Do you have a Bible?			Do you speak Dangme?		
Response	frequency	Percentage (%)	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	521	99.6	Yes	523	100
No	2	0.4	No	0	0
Total	523	100	Total	523	100
Do you have a Dangme Bible?			Do you read Dangme?		
Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	399	76.3	Yes	523	100
No	124	23.7	No	0	0
Total	523	100	Total	523	100
Do you read the Dangme Bible?			Are you a Dangme?		
Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	449	85.9	Yes	523	100
No	74	14.1	No	0	0
Total	523	100	Total	523	100
Are you a Christian?					
Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)			
Yes	523	100			
No	0	0			
Total	523	100			



The Frequency Distribution Tables (table 4.3) is a summary of the background of our respondents. From the table, all five hundred and twenty-three (100%) respondents are Dangme Christians who speak and read Dangme and out of the total number of the respondents, only two (2) do not have Bible representing 0.4% while five hundred and twenty-one (521) forming 99.6% of the respondents have Bibles. In verifying the popularity of the Dangme translation of the Bible (*Ngmami Klɔuklɔ ɔ*), three hundred and ninety-nine (399) respondents representing 76.3% have the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ ɔ*, while one hundred and twenty-four (124), representing 23.7% do not have the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ ɔ*. Though all respondents read Dangme, only four hundred and ninety-nine (499) forming 85.9% read the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ ɔ*, while seventy-four (74) representing 14.1% do not read it. The 14.1% could as well be people who have no access to the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ ɔ* or those who think they may not have the right interpretation and understanding when they read it.

4.5.1 The Dialectal Areas

Table 4.4: Distribution of Dialectal Areas of Respondents

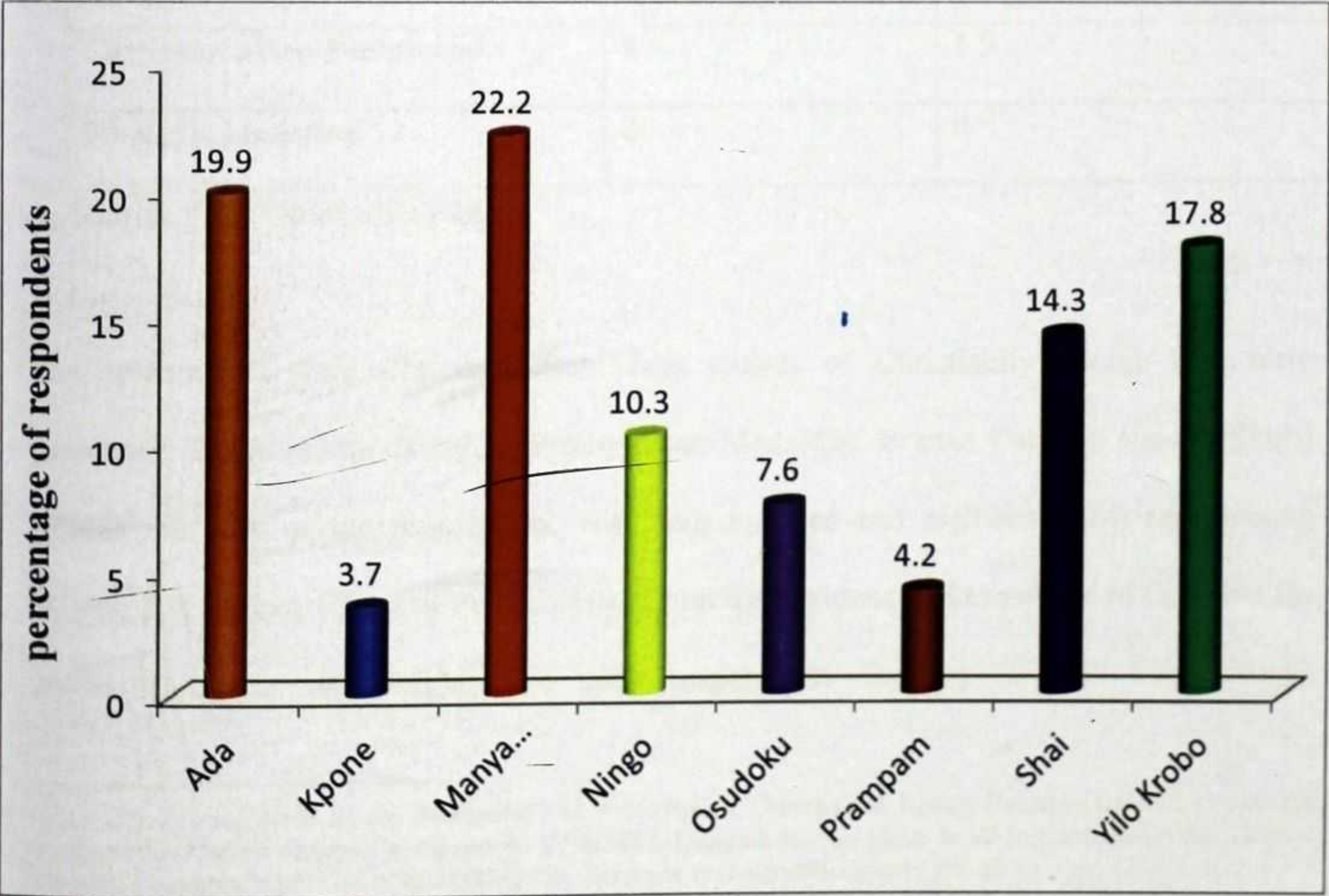
Area	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ada	104	19.9
Kpone	19	3.7
Manya Krobo	116	22.2
Ningo	54	10.3
Osudoku	40	7.6
Prampam	22	4.2
Shai	75	14.3



Yilo Krobo	93	17.8
Total	523	100

Table 4.4, is a composition of how the dialectal areas forming the Dangme language participated in the survey. The questionnaires were not evenly distributed among them because some areas are wider than others. From the table, Manya Krobo had one hundred and sixteen (116) respondents representing 22.2%, followed by Ada with one hundred and four (104) representing 19.9%, Yilo Korbo had ninety-three (93) respondents forming 17.8%. Shai followed with seventy-five (75) making 14.3%, Ningo had fifty-four (54), making 10.3%, while Osudoku had forty (40) respondents representing 7.6%, Prampram had twenty-two (22) representing 4.2% and Kpone had nineteen (19) representing 3.6% of the total respondents. The information from the table is pictorially presented as follows:

Figure 4.4: Distribution of Dialectal Areas of Respondents





Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

The Dangme language is getting extinct at Kpone and it is not even used in public worship<sup>175</sup> and even some are not aware of the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* ɔ. However, the 3.6% were from Kpone-Bawaleshie which shares common boundaries with Dodowa. Prampram also speaks Dangme with Ga accent. This is because there is great linguistic influence from the Ga people, though Dangme is read and spoken in public worship.

#### 4.5.2 Strands of Christianity

Table 4.5 Distribution of strands of Christianity

Strand of Christianity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
AICs	8	1.5
Mainline	418	79.5
Classical Pentecostals	89	17.5
Charismatic/Neo-Pentecostal	8	1.5
Prophetic Ministries	0	0

Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

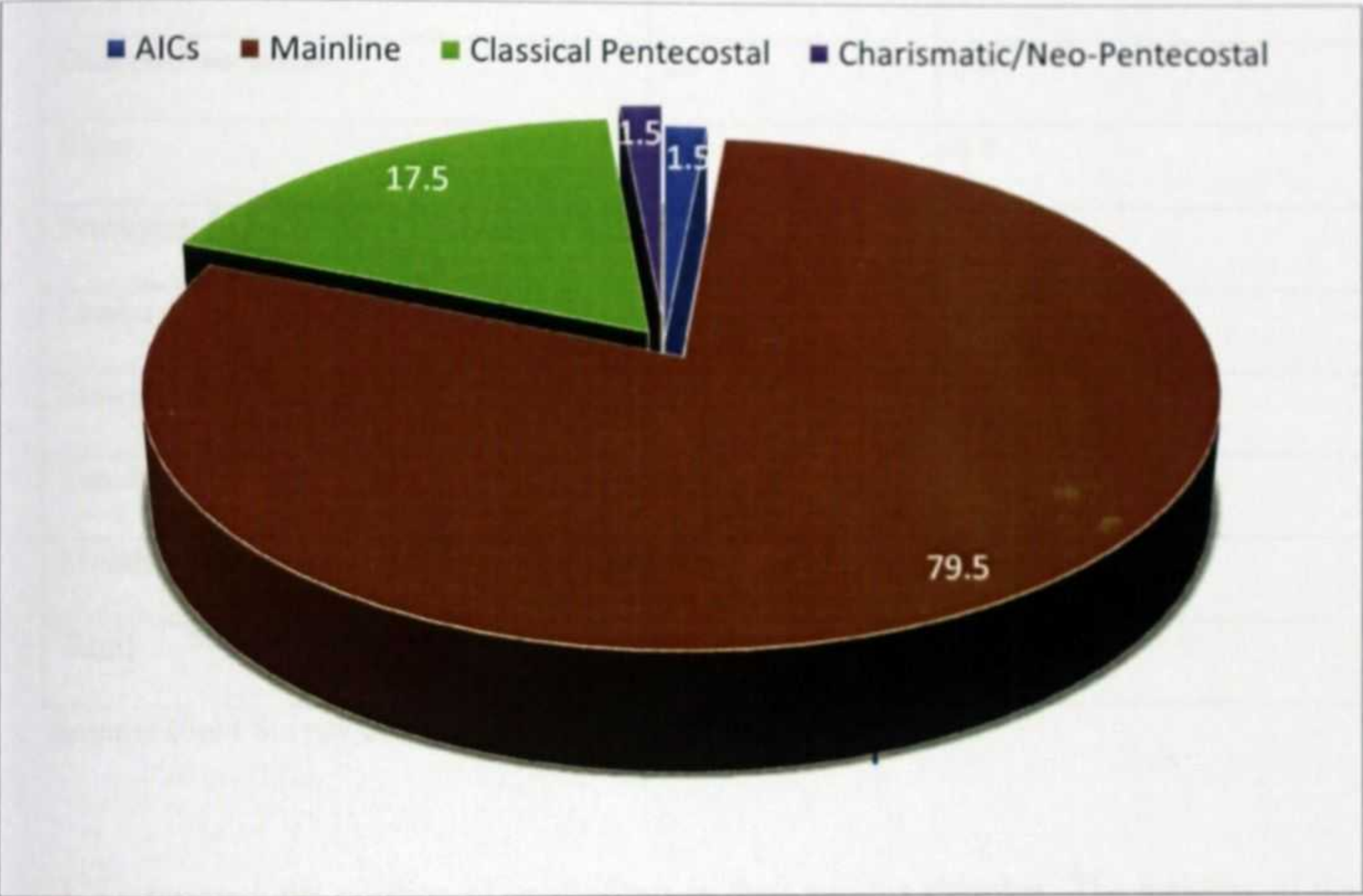
The respondents were Christians from four strands of Christianity though five were presented. The Mainline churches (Presbyterian, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Anglican) formed the bulk of the respondents, with four hundred and eighteen (418) representing 79.9%; followed by Classical Pentecostals (Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God and the Apostolics, etc.) with eighty-nine (89) respondents forming 17.5%. The African

<sup>175</sup> An observation made in the Methodist and Presbyterian churches at Kpone-Haanaa (Kokompe) and the Presbyterian Church (Bethel) at Kpone on 27/4/2013. Dangme has no place at all in public worship. Haanaa Churches worship with Twi with smiting Ga. Sermons and announcements are all in Twi. (The researcher's personal observation).



Indigenous/Independent Churches (Musama Disco Christo Church.) and Charismatic/Neo-Pentecostal Churches have eight (8) forming 1.5% each. There were no respondents from the Prophetic Ministries hence 0%. The study did not cover New Religious Movements. This is pictorially represented on the bar chart below:

Figure 4.5 Distribution of strands of Christianity



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014



### 4.5.3 Position of Respondents in Church

Table 4.6: Distribution of Position of Respondents in Church

Position	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pastor/Minister	24	4.6
Catechist	15	2.9
Deacon/Deaconess	20	3.8
Elder	24	4.6
Presbyter	63	12.0
Leader	45	8.6
Steward	12	2.3
Teacher	18	3.3
Member	303	57.9
Total	523	100

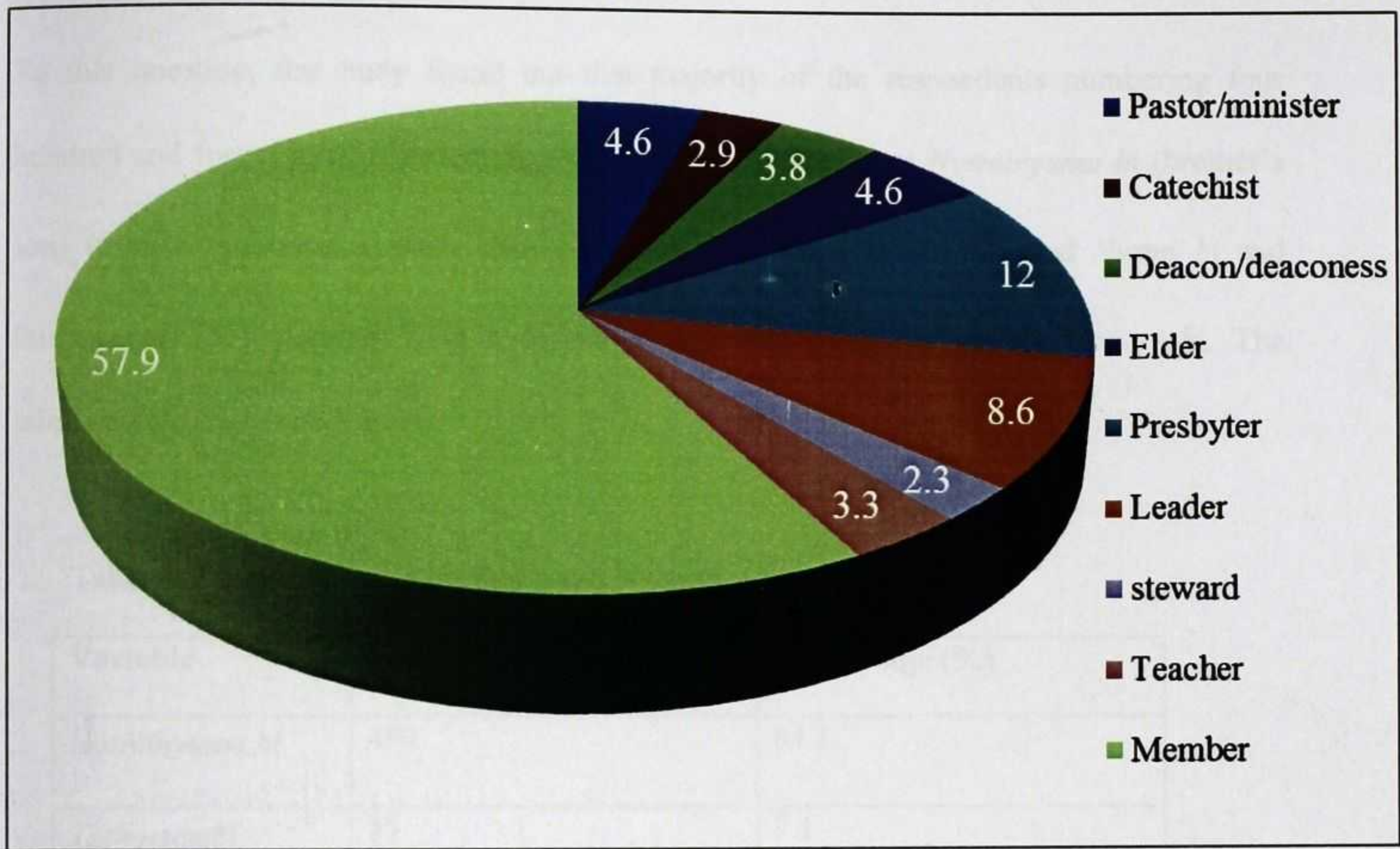
Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

Table 4.6 shows the position of respondents in their various churches. The majority of the respondents being members with three hundred and three (303) representing 57.9%, followed by Presbyters numbering sixty-three (63), representing 12% and forty-five Leaders (45) representing 8.6%. Pastors/Ministers were twenty-four (24) representing 4.6 and Elders were also twenty-four (24) resulting in 4.6%. Deacons/Deaconesses were twenty (20) and representing 3.8%, followed by Teachers numbering eighteen (18) making 3.3% and Catechists were fifteen (15) forming 2.9% and Stewards were twelve (12) representing 2.3%.

This is presented on the pie chart below:



Figure 4.6: Distribution of Position of Respondents



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

4.6 Some Translation and Interpretation Problems in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami*

*Klɔuklɔu* ɔ.

Considering the critical issue, that is some translation challenges that affect reading and interpretation in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* ɔ, the following were the results from the field survey.

Question: How do you interpret/translate the underlined words in bracket in the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* ɔ with respect to the Dangme culture?

4.6.1 Translation and interpretation of Brother's Son

- a. Genesis 12:5 Abram ngo e yɔ Sarai, ke e wɔfase (brother's son) Lot, ke e weto ni, ke nyɔguehi ne a na nge Haran ɔ, ne a pue nɔ ke ho Kanaan zugba a nɔ ya.



To this question, the study found out that majority of the respondents numbering four hundred and forty (440), representing 84.1% are of the view that *Nyɛminyumu bi* (brother's son) is most appropriate, while forty-six (46) representing 8.8% endorsed *Nyɛmi bi* and thirty-seven (37) forming 7.1% endorsed *Tsɛkotsɛmbi* which is mostly from Ada. The tabulated results are as follows:

Table 4.7: Translation of Brother's son in the Dangme Culture

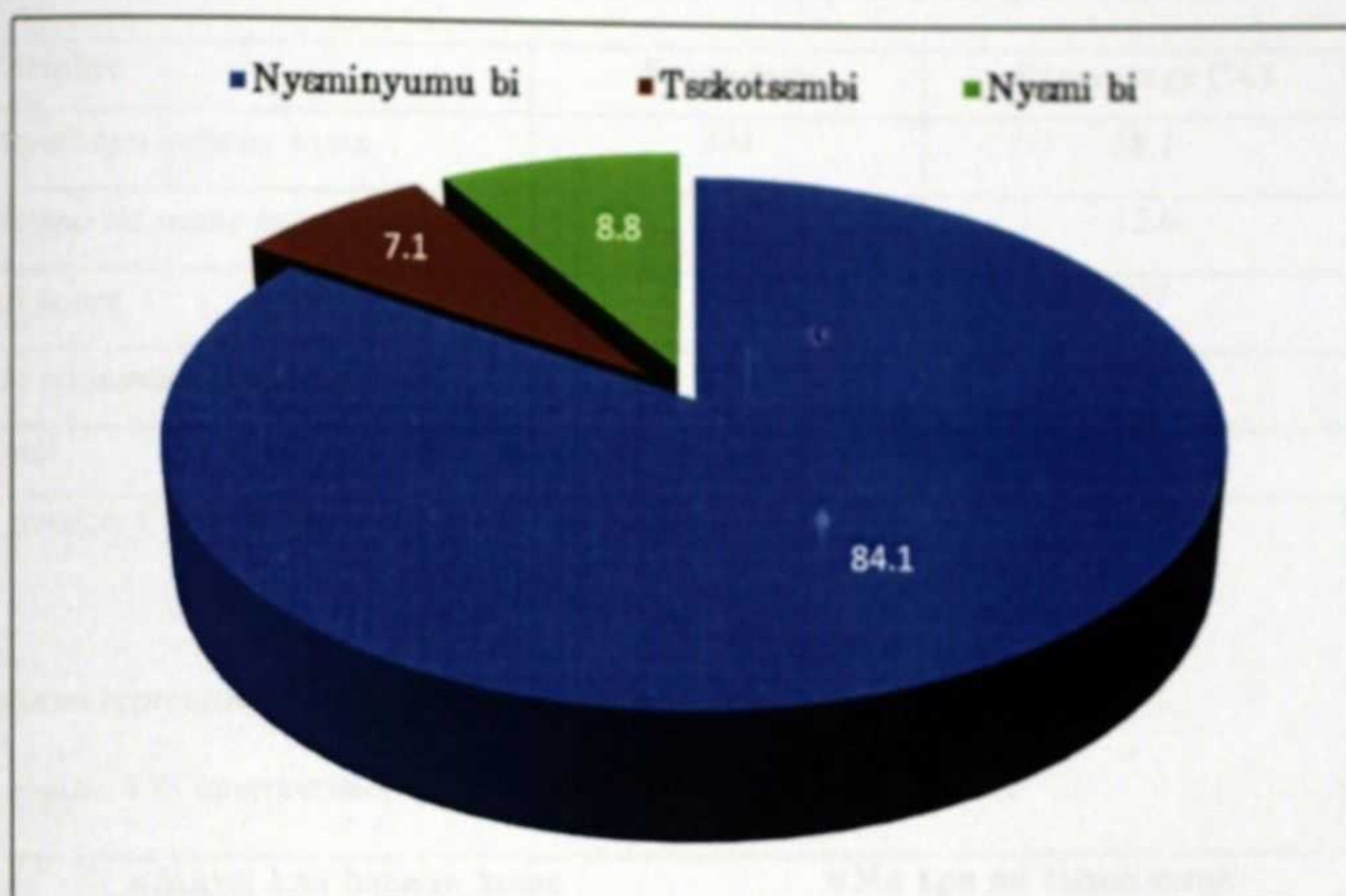
Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Nyɛminyumu bi</i>	440	84.1
<i>Tsɛkotsɛmbi</i>	37	7.1
<i>Nyɛmi bi</i>	46	8.8
Total	523	100

Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

The outcome of respondents in the translation of brother's son clearly endorsed the understanding of the issue raised with the translation with respect to Dangme culture and worldview. The pictorial representation of the result is represented below:



Figure 4.7: Translation of Brother's son in Dangme Culture



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

#### 4.6.2 Translation and Interpretation of Mixed Multitude

- b. Eksodo 12: 38 *Futufutu nimli* (mixed multitude) *kome hu pie a he, ke tohi, ke nahi babauu.*

The translation and interpretation of 'mixed multitude' in the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* ɔ, have majority of the respondents, numbering three hundred and four (304), representing 58.1%, translating the text as *Majeli kpa babauu kome*. Followed by one hundred and thirty-nine (139), representing 26.6% of the respondents rendering it as *Ma munomuno mi tse me kome* whilst sixty-six (66) respondents representing 12.6% choose *Ma kpa mi tse me kome* and fourteen (14) respondents representing 2.7% also choose *Jiji kome*. This is tabulated as:



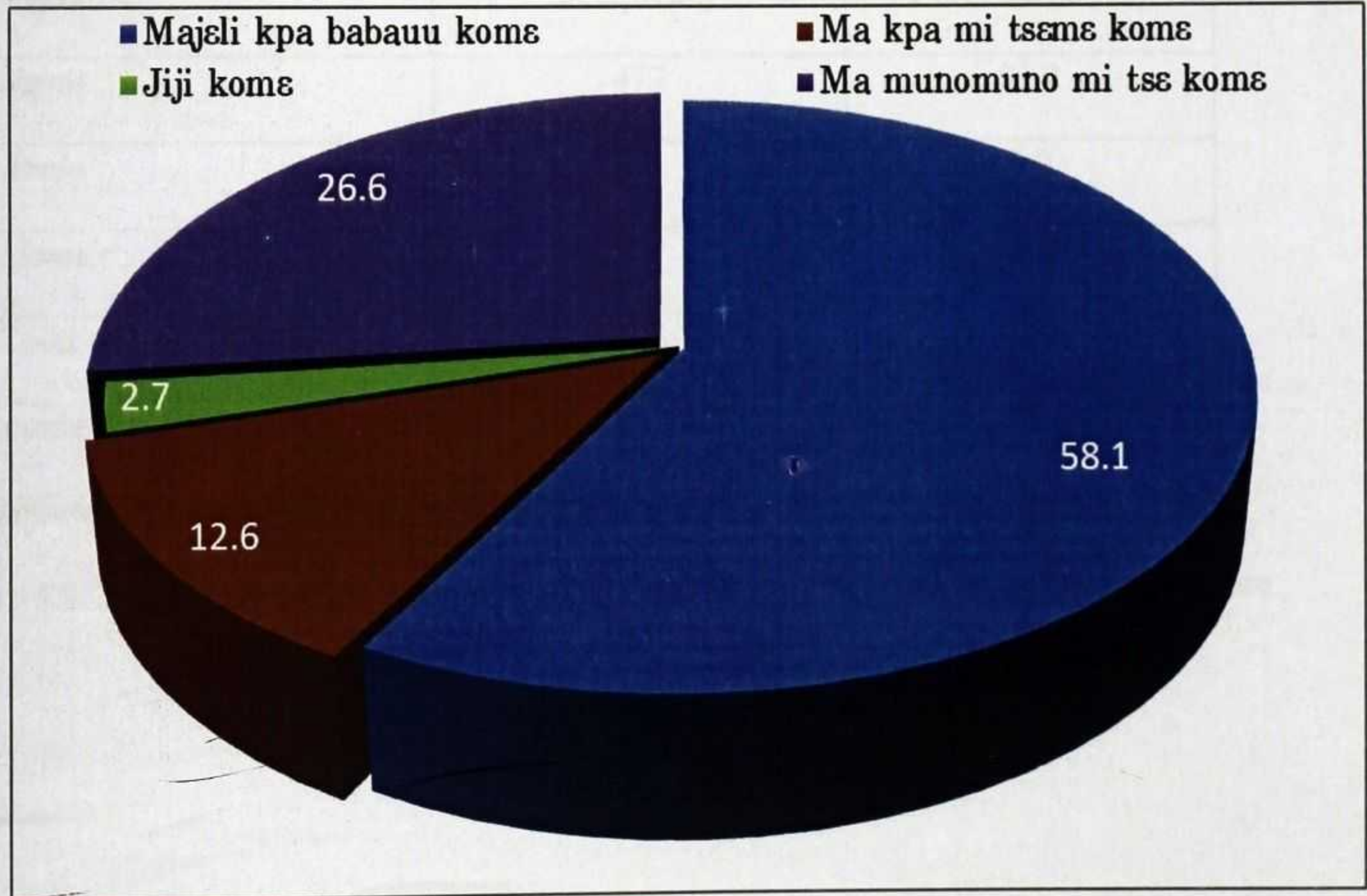
Table 4.8: Interpretation of mixed multitude with respect to Dangme culture

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Majeli kpa babauu komε</i>	304	58.1
<i>Ma kpa mi tsεmε komε</i>	66	12.6
<i>Jiji komε</i>	14	2.7
<i>Ma munomuno mi tsε mεkomε</i>	139	26.6
Total	523	100

Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

The pictorial representation of the respondents is presented in the pie chart below:

Figure 4.8: Interpretation of Mixed Multitude in Dangme Culture



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014



4.6.3 Translation and Interpretation of Grain Offering

c. Levitiko 2:1 Ke nɔ ko ngɔ niye ni (grain) kɛ ma bɔ sami ha Yawɛ ɔ, e wɛɛ lɛ bukɔbukɔ kɛ pee mamu. E pue nɔ oliv nu, kɛ tsopa kɛ e he via...

The translation and interpretation of ‘grain offering’ in the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* ɔ, also received some response from the field survey. Majority of the respondents numbering four hundred and seventy-seven (477) representing 91.2% endorsed *Ngma* (grain/millet)/ whilst twenty-six (26) representing 5.0% of respondents endorsed *Abolo* (food/bread) and twenty (20) forming 3.8% choose *Mamu* (flour). This information is presented in the table below:

Table 4.9: Translations and Interpretation of ‘Grain Offering’ in Dangme Culture

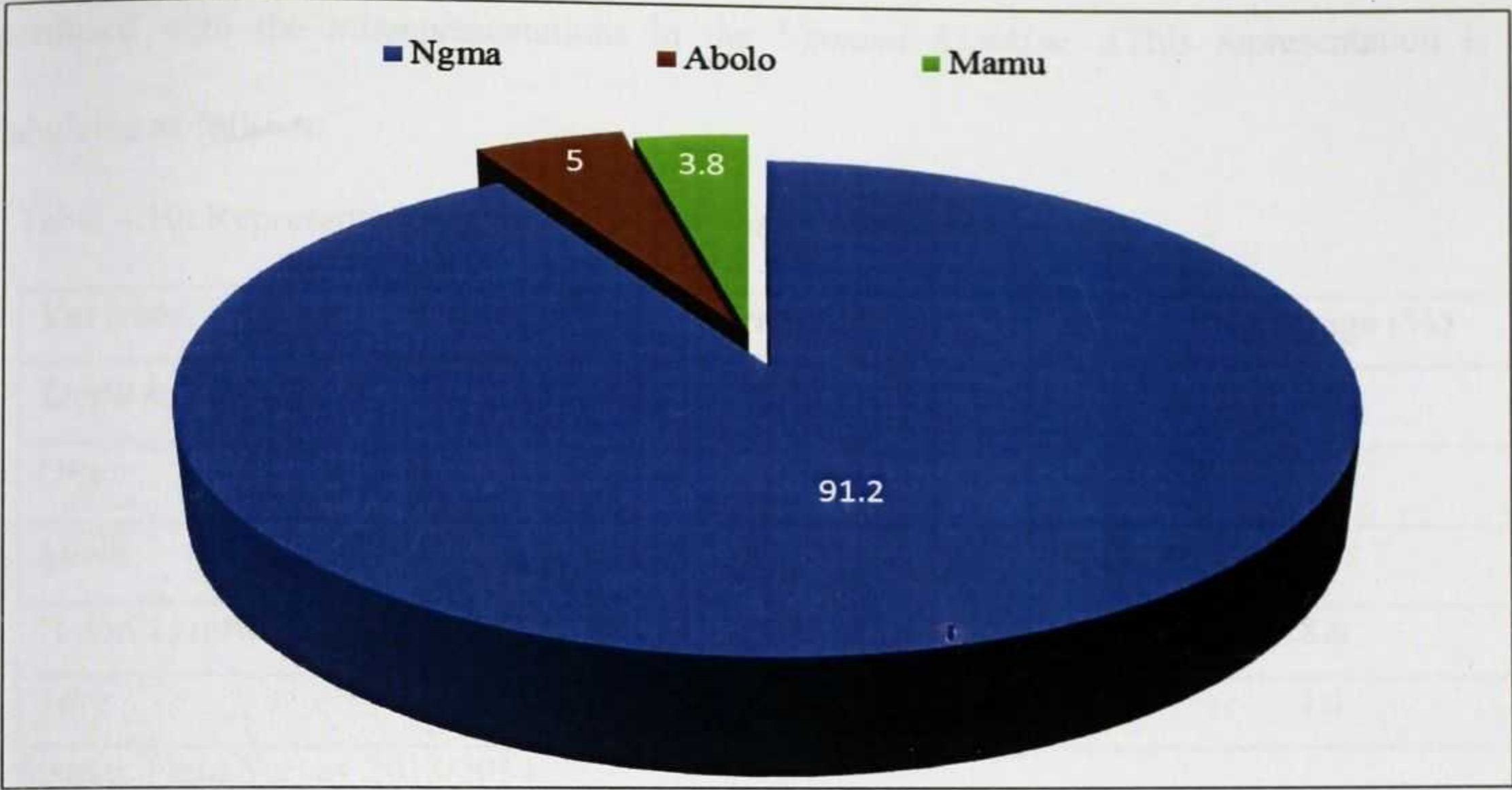
Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Ngma</i>	477	91.2
<i>Abolo</i>	26	5.0
<i>Mamu</i>	20	3.8
Total	523	100

Source: field survey 2013/2014

The pictorial representation of the respondents is presented in the pie chart below:

Figure 4.9: Translation and interpretation of ‘grain offering’ with respect to Dangme culture





Source: field survey 2013/2014

4.6.4 Translation and interpretation of Frankincense

d. How do the Dangme call frankincense?

It can be deduced from table 4.1 that the translation and interpretation of ‘frankincense’ received many inconsistencies in the Dangme translations of the Bible. Frankincense has been rendered differently in the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* ɔ. It is baffling why the translators did not mention *Ohɛ* anywhere in the Dangme translations of the Bible.

From the field survey, majority of the respondents numbering four hundred and fourteen (414), representing 79.2% endorsed *Ohɛ*, while forty-five (45), representing 8.6% chose ‘I don’t know,’ forty-three (43), forming 8.2% endorsed *Mimɛ*. Fifteen (15) thus 2.9% of the respondents chose ‘*Tsopa kɛ he via*’ and six (6) representing 1.1% suggested *mire*. The mixed response may be from the influence of the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔu* ɔ, since *mire* is not Dangme and *tsopa kɛ he via* is also misrepresentation. Those who choose ‘I don’t know,’ may be



confused with the misrepresentations in the *Ngmami Klouklou* 2. This representation is tabulated as follows:

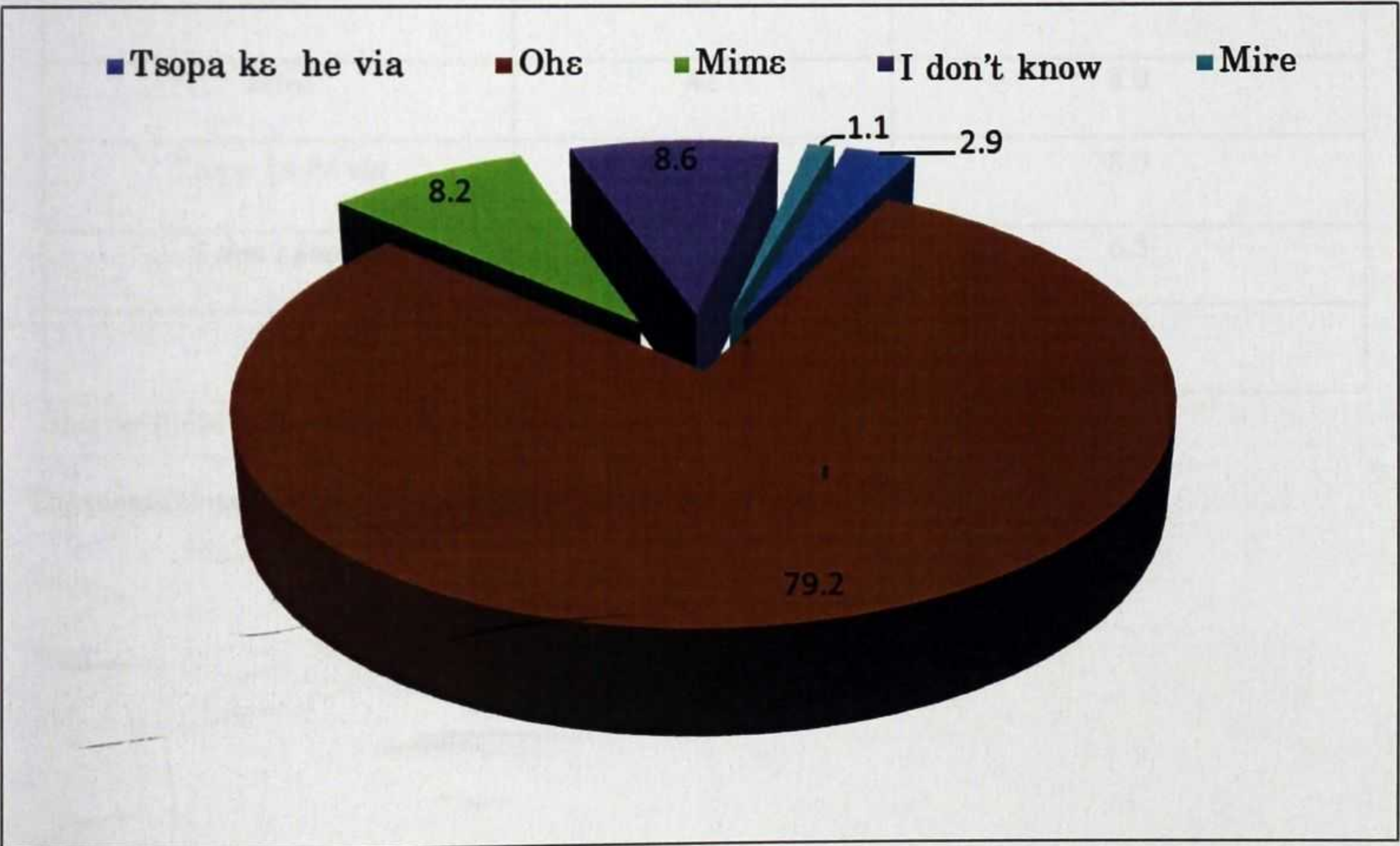
Table 4.10: Representation of how the Dangme call Frankincense

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Tsopa ke he via</i>	15	2.9
<i>Ohε</i>	414	79.2
<i>Mimε</i>	43	8.2
"I don't know"	45	8.6
<i>Mire</i>	6	1.1

Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

The pictorial representation of the respondents is presented in the pie chart below;

Figure 4.10: Representation of how the Dangme call Frankincense



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014



#### 4.6.5 Translation and interpretation of Myrrh

e. How do the Dangme call Myrrh?

Again from table 4.1, the word 'myrrh' also received some inconsistencies in the Dangme translations of the Bible. The study found that three hundred and ninety-one (391), representing 74.8% endorsed *Mimɛ*, while both *mire* and *Tsopa kɛ he via* forty-two (42) indicating 8.0% of the total respondents. Thirty-four (34) respondents, forming 6.5% may be confused, hence they chose 'I don't know' and fourteen (14) respondents representing 2.7%, chose *ohɛ*. This representation is tabulated as follows:

Table 4.11: Representation of how the Dangmes call Myrrh

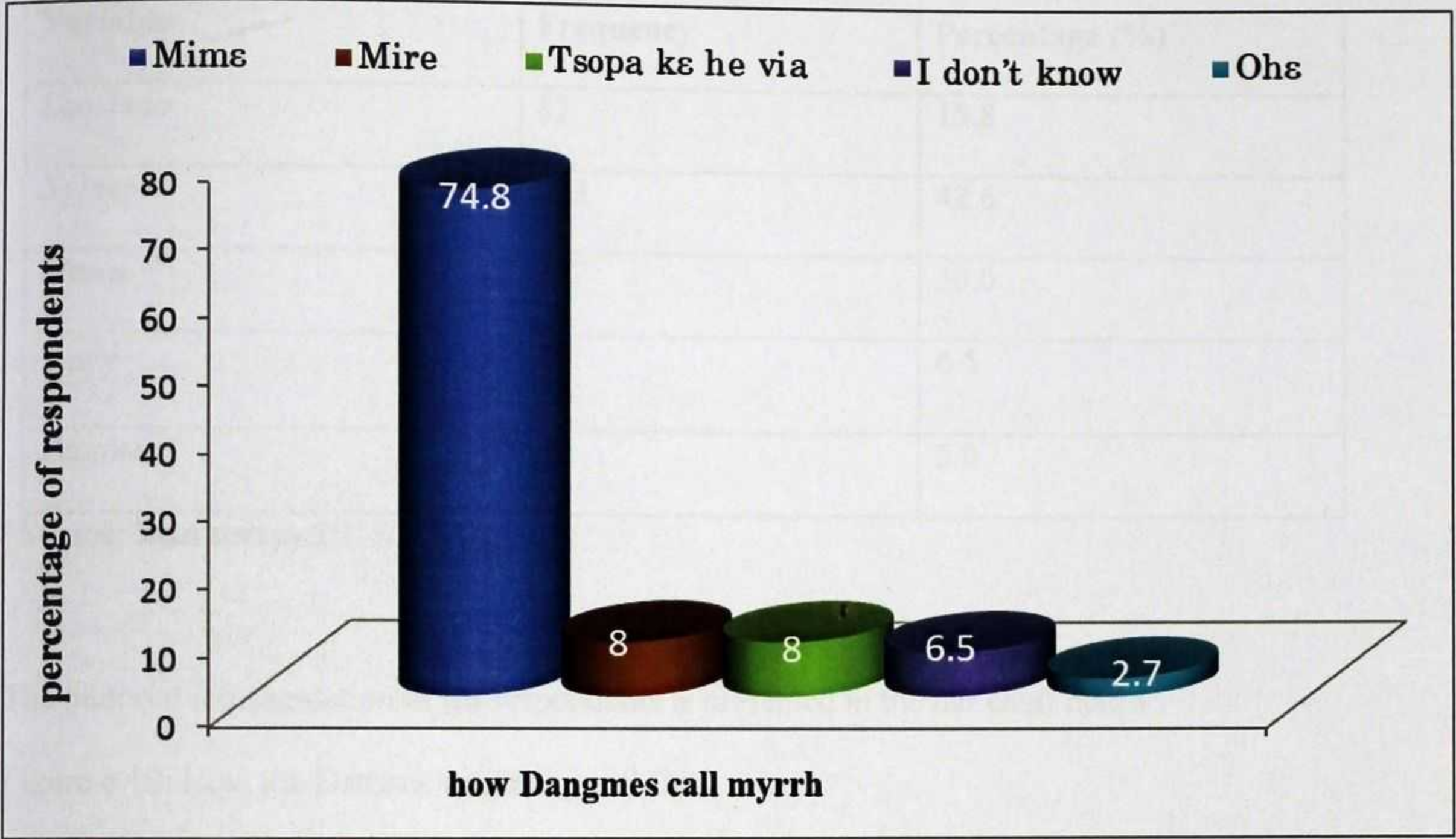
Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Mimɛ</i>	391	74.8
<i>Mire</i>	42	8.0
<i>Tsopa kɛ he via</i>	42	8.0
<i>I don't know</i>	34	6.5
<i>Ohɛ</i>	14	2.7

Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

The pictorial representation of the respondents is presented in the bar chart below:



Figure 4.11: Representation of how the Dangme call Myrrh



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

4.6.6 The Name of God

f. How do the Dangme originally call God?

This question is necessary because of how *Mawu* has been rendered in the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ*

a. The Dangme never pluralize the name of God, yet the *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ* translates the Hebrew word *elohim* as *Mawu*, *mawu* and *mawuhi* and this is not acceptable to the Dangme culture and worldview. From the field survey, many respondents numbering two hundred and twenty-three (223) representing 42.6% chose *Nyingmo*, whilst one hundred and fifty-seven (157) representing 30.0% of the respondents opted for *Mawu*. Eighty-two (82) forming 15.2% endorsed *Laosiada* while thirty-five (35) representing 6.7% chose *Yawɛ*, and twenty-six (26) representing 5.0% choose *Yehowa*. This representation is tabulated as follows:



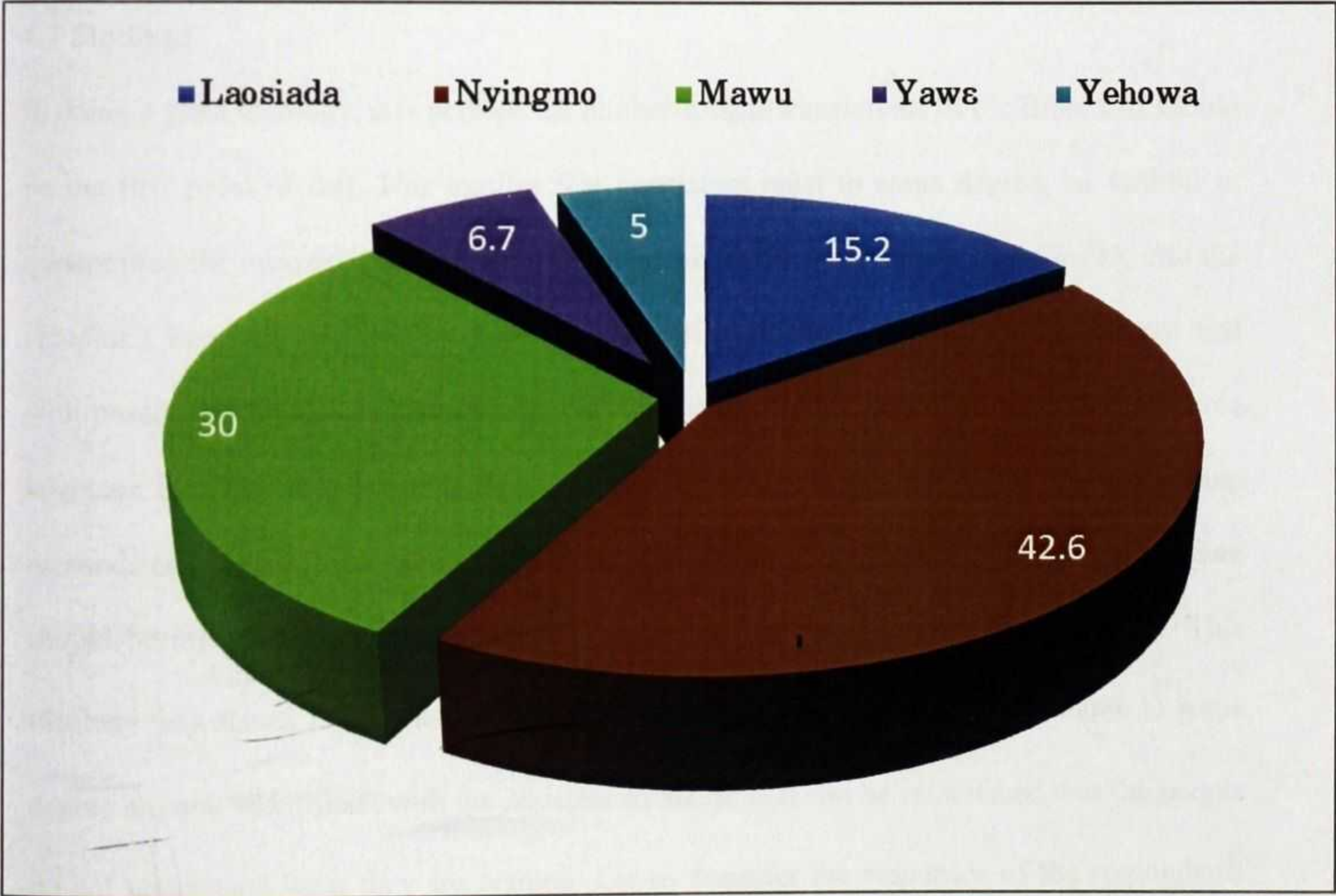
Table 4.12: How the Dangmes originally call God

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<i>Laosiada</i>	82	15.8
<i>Nyingmo</i>	223	42.6
<i>Mawu</i>	157	30.0
<i>Yawε</i>	35	6.5
<i>Yehowa</i>	26	5.0

Source: field survey 2013/2014

The pictorial representation of the respondents is presented in the bar chart below:

Figure 4.12: How the Dangme originally call God



Source: Field Survey 2013/2014



Table 4.13: Cross tabulation of age against how the Dangmes originally call GOD

Age	Laosiada		Nyingmo		Mawu		Yawɛ		Yehowa		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
18-30	9	9	19	19.0	49	49	12	12	11	11	100	100
31-40	25	12.3	76	37.4	74	36.5	17	8.4	11	5.4	203	100
41-50	32	23.9	68	50.7	25	18.7	5	3.7	4	3.0	143	100
51-60	15	24.2	37	59.7	9	14.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	62	100
1 & above	1	4.6	23	95.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	24	100
Total	82	15.8	223	42.6	157	30.0	34	6.5	26	5.0	523	100

Source: Field Survey 2013/2014

### 4.7 Findings

In doing a good theology, it is perhaps the mother-tongue translations of the Bible that should be the first point of call. This implies that translators must to some degree, be faithful in transporting the message from the original languages (Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek), into the receptor’s language (the mother-tongue). The desire of biblical translators should not end with producing ‘interlinear translations’ that import the culture and worldview of the source language into the receptive language. Translating should target age brackets, generational demands and social groupings in order to meet the needs of its audiences. That is why there should be the need for assessment before venturing into any Bible translation work. This ideology was absent in the translation of the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀ ɔ*, and the Dangme to some degree are not “identified” with the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀ ɔ*. It can be established that the people do not understand what they are reading. Let us consider the responses of the respondents from the questionnaire, interviews and the study cells:



### New rendering of Genesis 12:5

Abram ngo e yo Sarai, ke nyeminyumu bi Lot, ke e weto ni, ke nyoguehi ne a na nge Haran  
o, ne a pue no ke ho Kanaan zugba a no ya.

### New rendering of Eksodo 12: 38

Majeli kpa babauu komε hu piε a he, ke tohi, ke nahi babauu.

### New rendering of Levitiko 2:1

'Ke no ko ngo ngma ke ma bo sami ha Yawe o, e weε le bukobuko ke pee mamu. E pue no oliv  
nu ke ohe

### New rendering of Numeri 5:15

Nyumu ne o ne e ngo e yo o ke ba osɔfo o ngo. Nyumu o ne heε ngma mamu kilo kake, ne ji bo  
o ne e maa sa nge yo o heo ke ba. E ko ple oliv nu ke pue no, ne e ko ngo ohe hu ke fo no;  
ejakaa hunga niye ni bo ji ne o ne; bo ne nyumu ne yi mi te e yo he ba sa, konε a hla anɔkualε  
o.

### New rendering of Deuteronomio 4:28

Nye ma ya sɔmo wɔhi ne a ke nɔmlɔ adesa nine pee nge leje o, tsohi ke tshi ne hyε we no, ne a  
nui no, ne a yi na, ne a nui no he fu.



## 4.8 Discussion

### 4.8.1 The Translation of 'brother's son'

The word used to translate 'brother's son' in the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* ɔ is *wɔfase* and appeared four times in the Book of Genesis. *Wɔfase* is an Akan word which describes how a brother calls his sister's children and the children in turn call their mother's brother(s) *wɔfa*. It is not certain how the word *wɔfase* made its way into the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* ɔ to describe the relationship between Abra(ha)m and Lot, the son of Haran. This translation lacks the cultural significance and vocabulary accuracy. It is worth noting that even the Akan translations never agreed on *wɔfase* as a translation of 'brother's son' as *wɔfase*. Let us consider a comparative rendering of other translation of 'brother's son' in some Ghanaian mother tongue Bibles:



Table 4.14: Comparative study of translation of בן-אחיי 'brother's son' in Gen 12:5 some Ghanaian mother tongue Bibles

Mother Tongue	Translation	Literal Translation	Remarks
Ga (BSG 1908/2001)	<i>Enyemibi</i>	His/her siblings child	Needs interpretation
Akuapem Twi (BSG 1964/2012)	<i>Ne nua ba</i>	His brother's child	A helpful translation
Asante Twi (BSG 1964/2012)	<i>Ne nua ba</i>	His brother's child	A helpful translation
Ewe (BSG 1931/2010)	<i>Tɔgayɔvia</i>	His younger brother's child	Close translation
Fante (BSG 1948)	<i>No nua ba</i>	His brother's child	A helpful translation
Dangme (BSG 1999)	<i>Wɔfase</i>	A borrowed Akan vocabulary	Helpless translation

Genesis 12:5

Abram ngɔ e yo Sarai, kɛ e wɔfase Lot, kɛ e weto ni, kɛ nyɔguehi nɛ a na ngɛ Haran ɔ, nɛ a pue nɔ kɛ ho Kanaan zugba a nɔ ya.

New rendering

Abram ngɔ e yo Sarai, kɛ Lot, nyɛminyumu bi ɔ Lot, kɛ a weto ni tsuo, kɛ nyɔguehi tsuo nɛ a na ngɛ Haran ɔ, nɛ a pue nɔ kɛ ho Kanaan zugba a nɔ ya.



4.8.2 Translation of mixed multitude

The word used to translate ‘mixed multitude’ in the *Ngmami Klɔ̀klɔ̀ ɔ* lacks consistency and has not contributed much to understanding. The phrase *futufutu nimli* carries the notion of an unorganised people and lacks the idea of ‘multitude.’ This translation needs an interpretation, because *futufutu nimli* is coined from the Ga translation.

Table 4.15: Comparative study of translation of ‘mixed multitude’ in some Ghanaian mother tongue Bibles

Mother Tongue	Translation	Literal Translation	Remarks
Ga (BSG 1908/2001)	<i>Futufutugbomɛi</i>	Mixed people	Lacks the idea of multitude
Akuapem Twi (BSG 1964/2012)	<i>Afrafrafo pii</i>	Great number of mixed people	A good translation
Asante Twi (BSG 1964/2012)	<i>Afrafrafoɔ</i>	Mixed people	Lacks the idea of multitude
Ewe (BSG 1931/2010)	<i>Amedzro gedewo</i>	Great number of mixed strangers	A good translation
Fante (BSG 1948)	<i>Aforafora dɔm</i>	Great number of mixed people Great	A good translation
Dangme (BSG 1999)	<i>Futufutu nimli</i>	Mixed people	Lacks the idea of multitude



Eksodo12: 38

Futufutu nimli komε hu piε a he, kε tohi, kε nahi babauu.

New rendering

Majeli kpa babauu komε hu piε a he, kε tohi, kε nahi babauu.

4.8.3 Translation of Grain Offering

The translation of ‘grain’ as *niye ni* in the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* is very misleading, because in the minds of the Dangme, *niye ni* is normally a ‘ready to be eaten food.’ But placing the translation in a functional context, a ready to be eaten food cannot be grounded into fine flour, therefore what the text meant is a grain of which *ngma* is appropriate.

Table 4.16: Comparative study of the translation of ‘Grain Offering’ in some Ghanaian mother tongue Bibles

Mother Tongue	Translation	Literal Translation	Remarks
Ga (BSG 1908/2001)	<i>Niyenii-afɔle</i>	Food offering	Lacks the idea of grain
Akuapem Twi (BSG 1964/2012)	<i>Aduan afɔre</i>	Food offering	Lacks the idea of grain
Asante Twi (BSG 1964/2012)	<i>Aduane afɔdeε</i>	Food offering	Lacks the idea of grain
Ewe (BSG 1931/2010)	<i>Nuɖivɔ</i>	Food offering	Lacks the idea of grain



Fante (BSG 1948)	<i>Edziban afɔ</i>	Food as offering	Lacks the idea of grain
Dangme (BSG 1999)	<i>Niye ni</i>	Food as offering	Lacks the idea of grain

The challenge with this translation is that it is not in a functional context. In all these translations, food offering should be replaced with a food item that can be grounded into fine flour. The King James Version also made this error by translating it as *meat* and this translation misled some other translations including the Ga (BSG 1908/2001), Asante Twi (BSG1964/2012), Akuapem Twi (BSG1964/2012), Fante (BSG1948), Ewe (BSG1931/2010) and the Dangme (BSG1999). Placing the translation in a functional context, *ngma* is more appropriate. The Ga (BSG 1908) translation did well by mentioning that the food offering should be '*ngma mamu*' (flour from *ngma*).

### **Levitiko 2:1**

'Ke nɔ ko ngɔ niye ni kɛ ma bɔ sami ha Yawɛ ɔ, e wɛɛ lɛ bukɔbukɔ kɛ pee mamu. E pue nɔ oliv nu, kɛ tsopa ke ehe via

### **New rendering**

'Ke nɔ ko ngɔ **ngma** kɛ ma bɔ sami ha Yawɛ ɔ, e wɛɛ lɛ bukɔbukɔ kɛ pee mamu. E pue nɔ oliv nu, kɛ **ohɛ**



#### 4.8.4 Translation of Frankincense

Frankincense<sup>176</sup> is a substance that is burnt to give a pleasant smell, especially during religious ceremonies.<sup>177</sup> Frankincense is ever present in the religious life of the Dangme and it is known among them as *ohɛ*. It is very unfortunate that the translation teams that worked on the New Testament and later the whole Bible ignored the use of *ohɛ*. Table 4.1 gives the various ways by which translators tried to describe frankincense (*ohɛ*) and sometimes confusing it with *Myrrh* (*mimɛ*), as in the chosen text. It is unfortunate that the translation denied the readers the right of understanding since they never expect *ohɛ* to be wrongly translated and misrepresented.

#### 4.8.5 Translation of Myrrh

In the Dangme translations of the Bible, *myrrh*<sup>178</sup> has been mishandled and confused with frankincense. In table 4.1, the representations are clearly displayed. The Dangme called it *mimɛ* and it is ever-present in their customs during birth and death rites.

#### Numeri 5:15

*Nyumu nɛ ɔ nɛ e ngo e yo ɔ kɛ ba osɔfo ɔ ngo. Nyumu ɔ nɛ hɛɛ ngma mamu kilo kake, nɛ ji bɔ ɔ nɛ e maa sa ngɛ yo ɔ heɔ kɛ ba. E ko plɛ oliv nu kɛ pue nɔ, nɛ e ko ngo mimɛ hu kɛ fɔ nɔ;*

<sup>176</sup> The *Smith's Handi-Reference Bible Dictionary*, defined *frankincense* as a vegetable resin, brittle, glittering and a bitter taste, used for the purpose of sacrificial fumigation. It was called *frank* because of the freeness with which, when burned, it gives forth its odour. It is obtained by successive incisions in the bark of a tree called *Arbor thuris*. The first incision yields the purest and whitest resin, while the product of the after incisions is spotted with yellow and loses its whiteness altogether as it becomes old.

<sup>177</sup> Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 7<sup>th</sup> Edition.

<sup>178</sup> The *Smith's Handi-Reference Bible Dictionary*, defined :this substance is mentioned in Exodus 30:23 as one of the ingredients of the 'oil of holy ointment' ; in Esther 2:12 as one of the substances used in the purification of women. The Greek occurs in Matthew 2:11 among the gifts brought by the wise men to the infant Jesus. Myrrh was also used for embalming. The *Balsamodendron myrrha*, which produces the myrrh of commerce, has a wood and bark that emit a strong odor; the gum that exudes from the bark is at first oily but becomes hard by exposure to the air.



*ejakaa hunga niye ni bɔji nɛ ɔ nɛ; bɔ nɛ nyumu nɛ yi mi tɛ e yo he ba sa, konɛ a hla anɔkuaale*

2.

### **New Rendering Numeri 5:15**

*Nyumu nɛ ɔ nɛ e ngɔ e yo ɔ kɛ ba osɔfo ɔ ngɔ. Nyumu ɔ nɛ hɛɛ ngma mamu kilo kake, nɛ ji bɔ ɔ nɛ e maa sa ngɛ yo ɔ heɔ kɛ ba. E ko plɛ oliv nu kɛ pue nɔ, nɛ e ko ngɔ ohɛ hu kɛ fɔ nɔ; ejakaa hunga niye ni bɔji nɛ ɔ nɛ; bɔ nɛ nyumu nɛ yi mi tɛ e yo he ba sa, konɛ a hla anɔkuaale*

2.

### **4.8.6 How do the Dangme originally call God?**

The main translation problems in the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* ɔ and many other Ghanaian mother tongue Bible translations are problems of the translators. The earliest translations of the Bible into Ghanaian languages were done by Missionaries who studied the source languages but relied on indigenous Ghanaian Christian converts who were up to the task of creating new 'vocabularies' that should seem different from everyday cultic use. For instance, the Creator God is never pluralized in most African languages, yet J. Zimmermann and his translators pluralized the name of the Creator God when it came to the translation of the Hebrew word *elohim* and its conjugations. Deuteronomy 4:28 rendered *elohim* as 'nyɔɔmɔ' gods. It is not clear why *wɔɔ* or *wɔɔi*<sup>179</sup> were not used.

Comparative translations of אֱלֹהִים, יְהוָה and אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה in some Ghanaian mother tongue translations. This is done to assess the degree of influence from earlier missionary translations of the mother tongue Bibles. The Ga translation of the Bible was completed in

<sup>179</sup> *Wɔɔ* or *wɔɔi*: (singular and plural of god). By definition, is anything that can work but cannot be seen and includes the smaller beings of specialized and limited activity associated with medicines and magic. This definition is from M.J. Field, *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People* London: Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 4.



1866 and the Akuapem Twi in 1871.<sup>180</sup> Therefore the Ga and the Twi versions have been consulted for most of the other Ghanaian mother tongue translations of the Bible.

Table 4.17: Comparative study of יהוה אֱלֹהִים, יהוה and יהוה אֱלֹהִים in some Ghanaian mother-tongue translations of the Bible

Bible Text	Genesis 2:4	Dueteronomy 4:27	Dueteronomy 4:28
Hebrew	<i>Yhwh elohim</i>	<i>yhwy</i>	<i>elohim</i>
Ga (BSG 1901)	<i>Iehowa nyɔɔmɔ</i>	<i>Iehowa</i>	<i>nyɔɔmɔi</i>
Akuapem Twi (BSG	<i>Awurade Nyankopɔn</i>	<i>Awurade</i>	<i>anyame</i>
Asante Twi (BSG	<i>Awurade Nyankopɔn</i>	<i>Awurade</i>	<i>anyame</i>
Fante Twi (BSG	<i>Ewuradze Nyankopɔn</i>	<i>Ewuradze</i>	<i>enyame</i>
Ewe (BSG	<i>Yehowa Mawu</i>	<i>Yehowa</i>	<i>Mawuwo</i>
Dangme (BSG 1999)	<i>Yawɛ Mawu</i>	<i>Yawɛ</i>	<i>mawuhi</i>
English (RSV)	Lord God	The Lord	gods

These words are the core of Christian theology and are found in almost every page of the Old Testament and the chosen texts are just for illustration. It can be seen that only the *Twi* translations rendered *yhwh* and *yhwh elohim* with an indigenous term, whilst the rest followed a different pattern. The concern of this research has to do with the use of *Yawɛ* instead of *Nyigmo*, which is known among all the Dangme dialectal areas as the Name of the Creator God *yhwh*.

The Dangme have several appellations by which they address the Creator God who is well known as a single Being and their aboriginal name and appellations are always in the singular. For instance, Enoch Azu writes:

Otiti blɔti! *Nyigmo* blɔti!

With all humility! God

<sup>180</sup> Y. Schaaf, *On Their Way Rejoicing: The History and Role of the Bible in Africa*. Akropong-Akuapem: Regnum Africa, 2002, p. 49.



<i>Iɔ blɛti!</i>	With absolute humility
<i>Waɔ blɛti wa tsɛ Nyiɔmo!</i>	We called God with absolute humility
<i>Wa tsɛ Nyiɔmo! Nyiɔmo nu!</i> <sup>181</sup>	We called God! God heard!

According to Huber, in a personal conversation he had with Enoch Azu, he insisted that the original name of God among the Dangme is *Nyigmo*.<sup>182</sup> Though *Mawu* is commonly known among the Dangme, Ga and the Ewe people, its origin is not certain. *Mawu* made its way into the Dangme and Ewe translations of the Bible as the equivalence of the Hebrew word *elohim*.

In the case of *elohim*, as presented in Deuteronomy 4:28, *mawuhi* is an unfortunate translation since the Dangme knows that deities that are categorized as handy-crafts are well known with names and functions in every Ghanaian community. For instance, these handy-craft deities in Dangme are called *wɔhi* (plural) and *wɔ* (singular), to the Ga people they are called *wɔji* (plural) and *wɔɲ* singular, for the Akan they are *abosom* (plural) and *ɔbosom* (singular) and the Ewe call them *legbawo* or *legba* for plural and singular respectively. It appears the translators settled on words such as *nyɔɲmɔi* or *nyɔɲmɔ* for Ga, *anyame* or *nyame* for Akan, *mawuwo* or *mawu* for Ewe, and *mawuhi* or *mawu* for the Dangme. These words are outside the reach of the people to whom the translations were meant to reach-out to and this is less helpful.

<sup>181</sup> E. Azu, *Adangme Historical and Proverbial Songs*. Accra: Gold Coast Printing Office, 1929, 12.

<sup>182</sup> H. Huber, *The Krobo: Traditional Social and Religious Life of a West African People*. Anthropos Institute, Augustin near Bonn, p. 233, footnote 1.



**Deuteronomio 4:28**

*Nye ma ya sɔmɔ mawuhi ne a ke nɔmlɔ adesa nine pee nge leje ɔ, mawuhi ne a ke tso pee, mawuhi ne a ke te pee, mawuhi ne hye we nɔ, ne nui nɔ, ke mawuhi ne a yi nɔ, ne a nui nɔ he fu.*

**New rendering**

*Nye ma ya sɔmɔ wɔhi ne a ke nɔmlɔ adesa nine pee nge leje ɔ, tsohi ke tɛhi ne hye we nɔ, ne a nui nɔ, ne a yi nɔ, ne a nui nɔ he fu.*

**4.9 Biblical Hermeneutics: Dangme Commentary on the Selected Texts****4.9.1 Genesis 12:5**

*Benɛ Mawu tsɛ Abram nge Haran ɔ, e tsɔɔ we lɛ he ne e ma wa tosi nge. Mawu de we lɛ ke eko ye ke bua e wekuli, lɔɔ heɔ e ngo Lot, enyɛmi nyumu Haran, ne e gbo nge Ur ɔ, bi nyumuɔ ke piɛ e he ke pue blɔ. Enɔ tsɔɔ wɔ kaa ke Mawu tsɛ wɔ ɔ, wa hɛ ko je wa weku nɔ. Lot peeɔ ahusa e jakaa etsɛ Haran ɔ gbo, ne sitlohe kpakpako be ha Lot. Abram ke e yo Sarai bɔmɔde kaa amaa to Lot. Enɔ peeɔ ɔ mɔbɔnami su ne Abram jekpo ne e sa kaa Kristofohi kulaa a pee ja.*

[When God called Abram in Haran, He never mentioned the destination to him. God never mentioned to him to neglect his family responsibilities, therefore he took along his brother Haran who died in Ur's son Lot along. This teaches us that when God calls us, we must never abandon our families. Lot is an orphan since his father Haran died and had no better dwelling place. Abram and his wife Sarai did well by adopting Lot. This shows an act of mercy that Abram exhibited and all Christians are called to do the same.]



#### 4.9.2 Exodus 12:38

*Benε Mawu ma je Israel bi ɔmε kε je Mizraim ɔ, e pee nyakpε okadi slɔtohi nyɔɔnma sɔuu loko Farao ɔ nε nge nɔ yee jama beɔmiɔ fie mε kpatakpata kε je Mizraim. Majeli kpa babauu nε nge Mizraim ɔ yeɔ nyakpε okadi nɔ mε a he odase. E nɔ ha nε majeli kpa babauu nɔ mε hu nyεε a se kε piεε a tohi kε nahi babauu ɔ he kε je Mizraim.*

*Enɔ tsɔɔ wɔ kaa tsapi Israel bi kεkε nε Mawu he a yiwami nge Mizraim, kε je haomi kε amane mi. Se nɔ tsuaa nɔ nε e na kaa e nge haomimi nε e he ye kaa Mawu ma kpɔlε ɔ, Mawu nge lε tsεε. Majeli kpa babauu tsɔɔ mahi nε pi Israel se mohu nihi nε a abato nibwɔ nge Mizraim.*

[When God was about to deliver the Israelites from Egypt, He sent ten plagues before the Pharaoh who was ruling at the time, hurriedly drove them out of Egypt. This great number of people were strangers who were in Egypt, and witnessed these plagues. This made the great number of strangers follow the Israelites together with the flocks of sheep and large herds of cattle.

This teaches us that God did not only deliver the Israelites from distress and discomfort. But all who believe that God can deliver them from distress, such are those God is calling. These great numbers of strangers are people who are not Israelites but people from different nations who were also dwelling in Egypt].

#### 4.9.3 Leviticus 2:1

*E sa kaa wa saa bɔ ha Mawu, nε wa kε na lε si nge e dlomi babauu ɔ he. Se ke noko maa sa bɔ ha Mawu ɔ, e sa kaa nɔ ɔ nε e gu blɔ nε Mawu tsɔɔ nɔ, konε e bɔɔ nε e sa Mawu hεmi.*



*Tsapi lohwehi a muɔ pɛ nɛ saa Mawu hɛmi se ngma bɔ hu saa Mawu hɛmi. Lɔ he ɔ, ke noko ngɔ ngma kɛ ma bɔ sami ha Mawu ɔ, jamatsɛ ɔ nɛ e e wɛɛ ngma bukɔbukɔ kɛ pee mamu. Konɛ e ko ha Osɔfo ɔmɛ nitsumi. Ngma bɔ nɛɔ ɔ ji sina bɔ ha Mawu nɛ e tsɔ ɔ kaa wa ngmɔ ni ɔmɛɔ, Mawu nɛ e kɛ dlowɔ. Esa kaa nɔɔ nɛ e pue ngma mamuɔ bɔɔ ko nɔ oliv nu kɛ ohɛ, konɛ e ngɔ nɔnɛ maa piɛɔ kɛ ha Osɔfo ɔmɛ.*

[It is worthy to offer unto God, as way to appreciate Him for His grace. But if someone wants to offer unto God, that person must follow the laid down procedure given by God so that He will appreciate the offering. God does not appreciate only blood sacrifices but grain offerings, He also appreciates. Therefore, if someone wants to present a grain offering to God, the person should grind the grain into fine flour, so that the priests will not labour grinding the grain. The grain offering is a thanksgiving unto God and it shows that all our farm produce are blessings from God. It is expected of the person to add olive oil and frankincense to a fraction of it and all the rest should be for the priests.]

#### 4.9.4 Numbers 5:15

*E ji gbalɔ yihi a blɔ nya kaa a ye a huno ɔmɛ anɔkuaɛ konɛ yi ɔmɛ ko gbla gbiɛ kɛ ba a weku mi. E sa hu kaa nyumu ɔmɛ nɛ a ye a yi ɔmɛ anɔkuaɛ. Se ke nyumu ko yimi tɛ lɛ nɛ e yo he ɔ, e se kaa e ngɔ abofu. E sa kaa e kɛ e yoɔ nɛ ya osofoɔ ngɔ konɛ e ya sa hunga bɔ ɔ sami nɛ Mawu tsɔɔ nɛ a pee ha lɛ. E nɔ ma ngɔ tuemi jɔmi kɛ ba ejakaa anɔkuaɛ yemi hia saminya nɛ gbasihimi.*

[It is the duty of married women to be faithful to their husbands so that the women do not incur God's wrath upon their families. It is also worth that husbands be faithful to their wives.



But if a man is not too clear about the wife, he should not handle her with anger. He must rather send the wife to the priest so that he offers the jealousy offering as directed by God. This will bring peace because faithfulness is very necessary in marriage.]

#### 4.9.5 Deuteronomy 4:28

*Mawu tu munyu ke bɔ Israelbi ɔmɛ kɔkɔ nɛ wɔ jami he, E de mɛ ke: ke a yi a somi ɔ nɔ, lɛɛ e maa gbɛ mɛ ke fiaa. Nɛ hɛnɛ a mayato nibwɔ nɛ ɔ, nyɛ ma ya ja wɔhi nɛ a ke nɔmlɔ adesa nine pee nɛ lejɛ ɔ.*

*Nɛ Dangmeli a je ɔ, wɔ ji tso, aloo tɛ, aloo zu nɛ a puɛ nɛ nikomɛ ngɔ a hemi ke yemi ke fɔ nɔ kaa yiwami hɛngɛmi. Wɔ nɛ kpa nɛ jema wɔ he. Mawu nyɛ wɔ jami lɔɔ heɔ e bɔɔ mɔde kaa e bɔ e bimɛ kɔkɔ nɛ wɔ jami he.*

[God spoke to caution the Israelites about the worship of hand-made gods. He told them that if they neglect His covenant, then He will scatter them abroad. And where they will dwell as strangers, they will worship gods that are produced with human hands. In the world view of the Dangme, idol is a handy-craft; from tree, or stone, or clay to which people subjected their faith for salvation. Idols are different from gods. God abhors idol worship hence He caution His children against idol worship.

#### 4.10 Conclusion

So far, this chapter attempted to illustrate with tables and pictorial representations of the major themes making up this thesis. It also touched on comparative translations of the Ga (BSG 1908/2001), Asante Twi (BSG1964/2012), Akuapem Twi (BSG1964/2012), Fante (BSG1948), Ewe (BSG1931/2010) alongside the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ ɔ*. This really raised questions such that the envisaged translation problems in the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ ɔ* are not



limited to the *Ngmami Klauklau* alone but are general issues to be encountered in the Ghanaian mother-tongue translations of the Bible. The next chapter concludes the thesis with summaries of findings, recommendations and conclusion.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

#### 5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the field findings: data collection, interpretation, analysis and discussed the response of the five hundred and twenty-three respondents, twenty-seven interviewees and four study cells, from the eight dialectal areas constituting the Dangme State. It incorporated comparative reading of the selected Pentateuchal texts in *Ga*, *Akuapem Twi*, *Asante Twi*, *Fante* and *Ewe* translations alongside *Ngmami Klɔuklɔ* and the Revised Standard Version of the English Bible. This present chapter concludes the thesis with recommendations from the findings.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings on the Selected Texts

The argument this far succeeded with plausible evidences that the Dangme translation of the Bible has some translation problems that affect its reading and interpretation. These translation problems are not limited to the Dangme translation of the Bible alone but most Ghanaian mother tongue translations too. The thesis focused on the Pentateuch and selected five pentateuchal texts to illustrate the argument. The findings of the thesis have a universal relevance to mother tongue Bible translation and are as follows:

##### 5.1.1 Genesis 12:5

The interpretation and analysis of the field finding illustrates that 84.1% of the total respondents, the interviewees and the study cells endorsed *nyɛminyumu bi* as the corresponding translation of the Hebrew phrase לֹט בֶן-אֲחִיו (lot ben-'ahiw). The translation



then presents the Dangme with a theology that does not need any special skill in its interpretation since the word in itself carries its own intended meaning. *Nyɛminyumu bi* in this context, explains that Abra(ha)m had other brothers and one of them happens to be Lot's father. The new rendering of the translation then becomes:

*Nɛ Abram ngɔ e yo Sarai, kɛ Lot, nyɛminyumu bi ɔ, kɛ a weto ni tsuo, kɛ nyɔguehi nɛ a na nɛ Haran ɔ, nɛ a pue nɔ kɛ ho Kanaan zugba a nɔ ya, nɛ a basu Kanaan.*

[And Abram took his wife Sarai, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their possessions and the slaves they acquired in Haran and they departed towards the land of Canaan, and they came to Canaan].

This rendering carries a better impression in theology and language to the Dangme reader and can have a theological dialogue with the Dangme translation of the Bible. With the new rendering, the reader can now develop an indigenous oral theology within the parameters of the Dangme culture. However, the other options, *Nyɛmi bi* and *tsɛkotsɛmi bi* were endorsed by 8.8% and 7.1% of the total number of the respondents respectively. *Tsɛkotsɛmi bi* was received mostly from the Ada dialectal areas.

### 5.1.2 Exodus 12:38

The translation of the Hebrew phrase עֶרֶב רַב ('*ereb rab*) with respect to the Dangme culture was found to be *majeli kpa babauu komɛ*. 58.1% of the total number of the respondents, the interviewees and the study cells endorsed *majeli kpa babauu komɛ* as the most appropriate translation of the Hebrew phrase. This rendering seem fitting in the context in which it is being used. *Majeli kpa babauu komɛ* brings out clearly the idea of mixed company of heterogeneous body who has mingled with the children of Israel as they escaped from Egypt. This rendering set the agenda for the re-interpretation of the text (Exodus 12:38), for the



Dangme reader to appreciate the fact that other nations might have also suffered the plight of the Israelites in Egypt. The new rendering of the translation of the text is:

*Majeli kpa babauu komε hu piε a he, kε tohi, kε nahi babauu.*

[A great number of foreigners were also with them, with great number flocks and herds].

It is significant to note that any person who is not an indigenous Dangme is referred to as *majeno* (singular) or *majeli* (plural). The Dangme translation of the phrase failed to link effectively, the great number that followed hence the need for the new rendering.

However, the other alternatives; *ma munomunomi tsεmε komε* was endorsed by 26.6%, *ma kpami tsεmε komε* was suggested by 12.6% and *jiji komε* was also suggested by 2.7% of the respondents.

### 5.1.3 Leviticus 2:1

The rendering of *קָרְבַּן מִנְחָה* (*qorban minha<sup>h</sup>*) received 91.2% of the respondents, the interviewees and the study cells suggested *ngma* as the cereal or grain that should be used in the 'gift offering' in this context. *Ngma* is the most widely used cereal or grain in the life of the Dangme from their aboriginal home. *Ngma* is used to prepare *ngma da* (a type of drink), *ngma mamu* (flour), *ngma ku*, (a type of food) *ngma nε a si* (roasted grain). Again *ngma* as a word is sometimes used synonymously to mean food and it is ever present in traditional and cultural rites of the Dangme tribes. From the perspective of the Dangme, there is no cereal that suits the intended concept of *minha<sup>h</sup>* than *ngma*. The translation then becomes:

*Ke nɔ ko ngɔ ngma kε ma bɔ sami ha Nyingmo ɔ, e wεε lε bukɔbukɔ kε pee mamu. E pue nɔ oliv nu, kε ohε.*



[When a person presents grain offering to the Lord, it should be grinded into fine flour. He shall pour olive oil on it and put frankincense on it].

In order to substantiate the translation with considerable clarity, the new rendering places the translation in a functional context since *ngma* can perfectly be grinded into fine flour. This rendering exerts a powerful impact on the Dangme readers and the entirety of the Dangme societies.

The other alternatives considered were: *abolo* (a type of bread) which received 5.0% of the respondents and *mamu* (flour) received 3.8% of the total number of respondents.

#### 5.1.4 Numbers 5:15

The rendering of frankincense in Numbers 5:15 in the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* ɔ is very unfortunate. The *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* ɔ translates frankincense in Numbers 5:15 as *mimɛ* (myrrh). But 79.2% of the respondents, the interviewees and the study cells endorsed *ohɛ* as Dangme translation of frankincense. It is not clear why the translators omitted *ohɛ* in the entire translation and why they never used *tsopa kɛ he via* as used throughout the translation.

The new rendering then becomes:

*Nyumu nɛ ɔ nɛ e ngɔ e yo ɔ kɛ ba osɔfo ɔ ngɔ. Nyumu ɔ nɛ hɛɛ ngma mamu kilo kake, nɛ ji bɔ ɔ nɛ e maa sa ngɛ yo ɔ heɔ kɛ ba. E ko plɛ oliv nu kɛ pue nɔ, nɛ e ko ngɔ ohɛ hu kɛ fɔ nɔ; ejakaa hunga niye ni bɔ ji nɛ ɔ nɛ; bɔ nɛ nyumu nɛ yi mi tɛ e yo he ba sa, konɛ a hla anɔkua le ɔ.*

[The man shall bring his wife to the priest. He shall bring one kilogram of flour being the required offering for the woman, he shall neither pour olive oil on it nor frankincense because



it is an offering of jealousy, an offering presented by a man with no clear conscience about his wife in order to find the truth].

The word used to translate frankincense in the text is *mimε* (myrrh). 74.8% of the total number of the respondents, interviewees and the study cells agreed that *mimε* is myrrh and not frankinsence.

### 5.1.5 Deuteronomy 4:28

The translation of אֱלֹהִים (*'elohim*), יְהוָה (*yhwh*) and יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים (*yhwh 'elohim*) in the Dangme translation of the Bible, calls for a critical study to ascertain a plausible translation and interpretation in the mother tongue. The concern for this thesis was to trace the Dangme aboriginal name of the Creator God. 42.6% of the respondents and the study cells endorsed *Nyingmo* as the Dangme aboriginal name of the Creator God. 30.0% suggested *Mawu*. *Mawu* is used by the Ga, Ewe, and the Dangme as the name of the Creator God. Further research could be conducted to delve into the meaning and the source of the name *Mawu*. *Laosiada* was endorsed by 15.8% of the respondents as the aboriginal name of the Creator God, but the study cells concluded that *Laosiada* is an appellation. *Yawε* and *Yehowa* were suggested by 6.5% and 5.0 % of the respondents and the study cells also remarked that *Yawε* and *Yehowa* were introduced to the Dangme communities since the missionary era and therefore are not Dangme names.

The word coined to translate *'elohim* in Deuteronomy 4:28 is *mawuhi* and this is not appropriate in the context of the Dangme, because the Dengme call such handicrafts as *wahi* (plural) and *wɔ* (singular). It is therefore suggested that:



Table 5.1: Suggested translations of of אֱלֹהִים ('elohim), יְהוָה (yhwh) and יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים (yhwh 'elohim)

Hebrew	Dangme	English
יְהוָה (yhwh)	Nyingmo	LORD
אֱלֹהִים ('elohim)	Mawu or wɔ or jemawɔ  (depending on the context)	God or gods  (depending on the context)
יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים  (yhwh 'elohim)	Nyingmo Mawu	Lord God

1.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following commendations have been made. That:

- Translators should study, know, understand and apply the biblical languages (Hebrew and Greek) as source languages to their mother-tongue translations. This will eliminate to the maximum, mediocratic translations and give way to excellent mother-tongue Bible translations that speak with conviction to its people.
- Ghanaian mother-tongue Bible translation organisations must endeavour to follow basic translation principles in order to curb inconsistencies and do a proper synchronisation between the books of the Bible. For example a Hebrew word in the Old Testament with its Greek corresponding in the New Testament must have the same mother-tongue rendering in the Old Testament and New Testament documents.
- Ghanaian theologians must base their theological framework on their mother-tongue Bibles in order to build strong theological base for their people. It is in the mother-tongues that people best express their theological realities that support their faith in



God. In other words, it is in the mother-tongue Bibles that people hear God speak to their soul.

- African/Ghanaian Christian theologians and translators should design and produce Bible study materials, study Bibles, Bible dictionaries and commentaries into the mother tongues to facilitate reading, hearing and understanding the Word of God in our languages. These resources will make Christian teachings speak to indigenous Ghanaian/African cultures meaningfully.
- African/Ghanaian Christian theologians should interpret Christianity as an ongoing act of grace inseparable from its cultural and linguistic context in order to construct self-knowledge and self-understanding Christian theology in the mother tongue that will be beneficial to human existence.
- The Bible Society of Ghana and other Bible Translation Agencies should seriously consider the issues raised and the corrections made in this thesis to the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* when it is being reviewed in the future.
- The translation of אֱלֹהִים ('*elohim*), יְהוָה (*yhwh*) and יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים (*yhwh 'elohim*) in some Ghanaian mother tongues translations of the Bibles such as the Ga, Asante Twi, Akuapem Twi, Fante, Ewe and the Dangme needs further research.

## 5.2 Conclusion

This thesis attempted to validate the fact that the *Ngmami Klɔklɔ* contained some translation challenges that affect reading and interpretation, using the Pentateuch as a case study. The Pentateuch is not a haphazard collection of books but a theological entity in a complex-whole and this has formed the datum of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures. The Holy Scriptures were authored in Hebrew (the Old Testament with smattering Aramaic) and Greek (the New Testament). These make it very necessary to access the Holy Scriptures in



translations. Since translation is a bridge that links the source language and the receptor language, it must be communicable and appreciative by the receptor community. This is the *raison d'être* for the research, to verify the translation of some words and phrases in the following Pentateuchal texts in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ – Genesis 12:4-5; Exodus 12:28; Leviticus 2:1; Numbers 5:15 and Deuteronomy 4:28.

The thesis argued that the use of *wɔfase* to translate the Hebrew phrase בן-אחי (ben-'ahiw) 'son of a brother' is unfortunate and lacks Dangme cultural and linguistic endorsement. The study revealed that *nyɛminyumubi* will best fit the context of the translation of Genesis 12:5 and elsewhere in the book of Genesis.

Moreso, the thesis also established that *majeli kpa babauu* is apposite to translate 'mixed multitude.' This places the translation in a functional context of the Israelites as well as the Dangme. To the Israelites and the Dangme, anyone who is not of their kind is a gentile (*majeno*) or gentiles (*majeli*). *Majeli kpa babauu* suggests that the mixed multitude that followed the Israelites out of Egypt, was well organised and not a haphazard group of care-free people.

Furthermore, Leviticus 2:1 in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ, has been contended strongly on the grounds that *niye ni* (any kind of food) is too general to translate grain offering, hence *ngma* was found to be a suitable replacement. It became quite obvious to render the translation in a functional context, since the offertory to be presented should be a kind of cereal or grain that could be milled into flour and that is why *ngma* remained the most fitting.

Again, the translation of frankincense in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ was found to be very unfortunate. For no reason, *ohɛ* is never mentioned anywhere in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ, though it is well known and used among the Dangme. The thesis provided evidence that



frankincense is *ohε* hence its misrepresentation in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ is untoward. In Numbers 5:15, frankincense is translated *mimε* (myrrh) and this gross falsification needed a scholarly approach and that was the task set for the thesis.

Lastly the thesis suggested אֱלֹהִים ('*elohim*), יְהוָה (*yhwh*) and יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים (*yhwh 'elohim*) in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ, suffered a cultural and linguistic challenge and suggested that *wahi* or *Mau*, *Nyingmo* and *Nyingmo Mau* should be used depending on the context. The coined word *mawuhi* is a gross theological misrepresentation and very unfortunate in the sense that the Dangme do not pluralize the name of God.

These underscore the need and attention that should be attached to Mother-tongue Bible translation. The challenge is that most of the Ghanaian languages are made up of different dialects and there is the need to take cognisance of these dialectal differences before embarking on any mother-tongue Bible translation enterprise.

The *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ is undoubtedly the greatest source of Dangme theologies and the reformulation of the theological basis of Dangme history. This makes for the reason why the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ should be subjected to such scrutiny so that it will speak to the Dangme in Dangme.

This research is a minute contribution to Bible translation, using functional contextualism in mother-tongue biblical hermeneutics as an approach to addressing some translation problem in the Pentateuch of the Dangme translation of the Bible.

The thesis has thus added to the traditional interpretation of:



1. Genesis 12:5 *Nε Abram ngo e yo Sarai, kε Lot, nyεminyumu bi ɔ, kε a weto ni tsuo, kε nyɔguehi nε a na nge Haran ɔ, nε a pue nɔ kε ho Kanaan zugba a nɔ ya, nε a basu Kanaan.*
2. Eksodo 12:38 *Majeli kpa babauu komε hu piε a he, kε tohi, kε nahi babauu.*
3. Levitiko 2:1 *Ke nɔ ko ngo ngma kε ma bɔ sami ha Nyingmo ɔ, e wεε lε bukɔbukɔ kε pee mamu. E pue nɔ oliv nu, kε ohε.*
4. Numeri 5:15 *Nyumu nε ɔ nε e ngo e yo ɔ kε ba osɔfo ɔ ngo. Nyumu ɔ nε hεε ngma mamu kilo kake, nε ji bɔ ɔ nε e maa sa nge yo ɔ heɔ kε ba. E ko plε oliv nu kε pue nɔ, nε e ko ngo ohε hu kε fɔ nɔ; ejakaa hunga niye ni bɔ ji nε ɔ nε; bɔ nε nyumu nε yi mi tε e yo he ba sa, konε a hla anɔkuaɔle ɔ.*
5. Deuteronomio 4:28 *Nyε ma sɔmɔ wɔhi nε a kε nɔmlɔ adesa nine pee nge lejεɔ, tsohi, kε tɔhi nε hyε we nɔ, nε a nui nɔ, nε a nui nɔ he fu.*



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Primary Sources: - List of People Interviewed

NO.	NAME	PROFILE	DATE	TIME
1.	S. B. Lawerteh, (Rev.)	PCG, Big Ada District Minister; National Director, Literacy Evangelism International – Ghana and past Dangme-Torngu Presbytery Clerk. A native of Ada	09/3/2014 16/3/2014	12:22 - 1:00pm 3:20 – 4:47 pm
2.	D. B. Adi,	Chief Examiner in Dangme; Retired Educationist and former Head of Department, Ghanaian Languages, University of Education, Winneba A native of Ada. He is 81 years.	09/3/2014 16/3/2014	12:16 - 1:20pm 1:50 – 3:02 pm
3.	E. D. Leiku (Rev.)	PCG, Aseewa District Minister; A key member of the <i>Ngmami Klaklax</i> translation team (BSG); Former Dangme Tutor, Ada Training College; A native of Ada - Sege	14/2/2014 18/3/2014	11:52 am – 3:04 pm 10:21 – 11:02 am
4.	J. B. Larwete (Rev.)	PCG, Sub-District Minister, Kpong; Retired Educationist A native of Ada	13/2/2014	3:20 – 4:20 pm
5.	T. D. Hushie	Retired Educationist; A native of Ada, she is 84 years	16/3/2014	1:30 – 1:45 pm
6.	N. Nortey	PCG Presbyter Children Service Teacher A native of Prampram. She is 58 years.	24/1/2014	4:14 – 5:20pm
7.	E. Kodi	MCG, Society Steward Prampram Dangme Teacher, Ningo Presby Basic School A native of Prampram. He is 59 years.	21/2/2014	5:00 – 6:31 pm
8.	S. T. Narteh	Retired Dangme Teacher; A member of COP, Prampram. He is 64 years	24/1/2014	5:40 – 6:30 pm



9.	N. T. Akwetey	Retired Educationist; A native of Ningo. He is 74 years.	21/2/2014	3:06 – 3:46 pm
10.	J. J. Omeku	PCG, Presbyter, Old Ningo Retired Educationist; Headmaster Global Senior High School, Old Ningo. A native of Ningo	24/1/2014	10:14 am – 12:12 pm
11.	V. Nyagotey	PCG, Catechist, Ahwiam A native of Ningo.	21/2/2014	1:30 – 2:23 pm
12.	A. T. Narh	PCG, Senior Presbyter, Bethel Congregation, Kpone. A native of Kpone. He is 62 years	27/4/2014	12:20 – 12:45 pm
13.	A. Narteh	PCG, Member, Bethel Congregation, Kpone. She 82 years.	27/4/2014	12:46 – 1:05 pm
14.	E. T. Lanyo	Retired Educationist; Headmaster, Presby Preparatory School, Kpone. A native of Kpone. He is 85 years.	27/4/2014	1:12 – 1:35 pm
15.	A. Yoweh	PCG Catechist, Mt. Zion, Dodowa. A native of Dodowa (Shai). She is 52 years	17/3/2014	11:22 am – 12:45 pm
16.	E. N. Ayertey	PCG District Treasurer, Dodowa. A native of Dodowa (Shai). He is 67 years	17/3/2014	12:50 – 1:40 pm
17.	M. K. Adjotei	COP Elder, Dodowa A native of Dodowa (Shai)	17/3/2014	2:15 – 3:13 pm
18.	T. J. L. Egli,	Retired Educationist, A native of Osudoku. He is 63 Years	26/3/2014	4:32 – 5:14 pm
19.	D. A. Asilevi	PCG Presbyter, Lenor-Osuwem; A retired Teacher A native of Osudoku. She is 57 years.	26/3/2014	2:02 – 2:44 pm
20.	J. Amartey,	PCG Presbyter, Asutsuare A native of Osudoku. He is 51 years old.	26/3/2014	1:30 – 1:56 pm



21.	F. E. K. Djangmah, (Rev.)	PCG, Manya-Kpongungor District Minister; Past Dangme-Tongu Presbytery Clerk and Retired Educationist. He is a native of Somanya (Yilo-Krobo)	13/2/2014	5:07 – 6:48 pm
22.	J. K. Anneh	PCG Minister in charge of Kodiabe.	20/2/2014	2:35 – 3:20 pm
23.	F. Adamtey,	MCG Society Steward, Somanya. A native of Somanya (Yilo- Krobo)	30/1/2014	11:00 – 11:35
24.	E. T. Terkpetey, (Rev)	PCG, Odumase District Minister; Past Asante-Akyem Presbytery Chiarperson Past Director, Church Life and Nurture, General Assembly Office. A native of Odumase (Manya- Krobo)	14/2/2014	5:26 – 6:07 pm
25.	D. S. Asare, (Hon.)	Former Manya Krobo District Executive and an educationist. A native of Odumase (Manya- Krobo).	20/2/2014	1:58 – 2:40
26.	S. O. Narh (Rev. Dr)	Eastern Regional Superintendent of the Assemblies of God Church; Senior Pastor, Coastland Assemblies of God, Agormanya.	21/2/2014	7:23 – 8:30 am
27.	D.E. N. Aminarh	A retired educationist and was part of the team that translated the <i>Wami Munyu ɔ kɛ La amɛ</i> (The Dangme New Testament with Psalms IBS 1997). A native of Adormeh, (Manya- Krobo). He is 82 years	28/4/2014	3:26 – 5:49 pm



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## APPENDIX I

## General Interview Questions

## General Interview Questions

1. What do you think are some of the problems we might encounter when a biblical text is not well translated?
2. Why should Bible translation a hermeneutical enterprise that demands features such as accuracy, clarity and naturalness?
3. What are some of the translation challenges you have noted in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klauklau*?
4. What translation problems do you envisage with the underline phrases/word in the following biblical texts?
  - a. *Levitiko 2:1 Ke nɔ ko ngɔ niye ni (grain) kɛ ma bɔ sami ha Yawɛ ɔ, e wɛɛ lɛ bukɔbukɔ kɛ pee mamu. E pue nɔ oliv nu, kɛ tsupa kɛ e he via (Leviticus 2:1)*
  - b. *Eksodo 12: 38 Futufutu nimli (mixed multitude) komɛ hu piɛ a he, kɛ tohi, kɛ nahi babauu. (Exodus 12:38)*
  - c. *Genesis 12:5 Abram ngɔ e yo Sarai, kɛ e wɔfase (brother's son) Lot, kɛ e weto ni, kɛ nyɔguehi nɛ a na ngɛ Haran ɔ, nɛ a pue nɔ kɛ ho Kanaan zugba a nɔ ya. (Genesis 12:5)*
  - d. How do the Dangme call *myrrh*?
  - e. How do the Dangme call *frankincense*?
  - f. *Numeri 5:15...Nyumu ɔ nɛ hɛɛ ngma mamu kilo kake, nɛ ji bɔ ɔ nɛ e maa sa ngɛ yo ɔ he ɔ kɛ ba. E ko plɛ oliv nu kɛ pue nɔ, nɛ e ko ngɔ mimɛ hu kɛ fɔ nɔ,.....(Num. 5:15)*
5. What are some of the challenges confront the Dangme reader when reading the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ, in the face of culture, tradition, language and theology?
6. How do the Dangme call God?
7. Final comments on the work.



**KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

## Some Translation Problems in the Pentateuch of the *Ngmami Klauklau* ၁ (Dangme Bible)

1. Name.....

2. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

3. Level of Education: Tertiary ☐ Senior High ☐ Junior High ☐

4. Age: 10-19 [ ]      20-29 [ ]      30-39 [ ]      40-49 [ ]      50-59 [ ]

60-bove [ ]

5. Do you have a Bible? Yes [ ] No [ ]

6. Are you a Dangme? Yes [ ] No [ ]

7. Which Dangme area do you come from? Ada [ ] Osudoku [ ] Ningo [ ]

Shai [ ]      Kpone [ ]      Manya Krobo [ ]      Yilo Krobo [ ]      Prampram [ ]

8. Do you speak Dangme? Yes [ ] No [ ]

9. Do you read Dangme? Yes [ ] No [ ]

10. Are you a Christian? Yes [ ] No [ ]

11. Which strand of Christianity do you belong?

1a. AICs: Saviour Church [ ] Divine Healers Ch. [ ] MDCC [ ] Others.....

1b. Mainline: Presbyterian [ ] Methodist [ ] R/C [ ] E.P [ ] Others.....

1c. Classical Pentecostals: COP [ ] AG [ ] CAC [ ] Apostolic Church [ ] Others...

1d. Charismatics/ Neo-Pentecostals: ICGC [ ] Action Faith [ ] Royal House [ ] Others...

1e. Prophetic Ministry .....



12. Location of the church.....
13. What is your position in church? Pastor/Minister [ ] Catechist [ ] Deacon/Deaconess [ ]  
 Elder [ ] Presbyter [ ] Leader [ ] steward [ ] Teacher [ ] Member [ ]  
 Others.....
14. Do you read the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ (Dangme Bible)? Yes [ ] No [ ]
15. Do you have the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ (Dangme Bible)? Yes [ ] No [ ]
16. How do you interpret/ translate the underlined words in bracket in the *Ngmami Klauklau* ɔ with respect to the Dangme culture?
- a. Genesis 12:5 Abram ngo e yo Sarai, ke e wɔfase (brother's son) Lot, ke e weto ni, ke nyɔguehi ne a na nge Haran ɔ, ne a pue no ke ho Kanaan zugba a no ya.  
 Nyɛminyumu bi [ ] Tsekotsembi [ ] Nyɛmi bi [ ]
- b. *Eksodo* 12: 38 Futufutu\_nimli (mixed multitude) kome hu pɛ a he, ke tohi, ke nahi babauu.  
 Majeli kpa babauu kome [ ] Ma kpa mi tsɛ mɛ kome [ ] Jiji kome [ ]  
 Ma munomuno mi tsɛ mɛ kome [ ]
- c. *Levitiko* 2:1 Ke no ko ngo niye ni (grain) ke ma bo sami ha Yawɛ ɔ, e wɛɛ lɛ bukɔbukɔ ke pee mamu. E pue no oliv nu, ke tsopa ke e he via, .....
- Ngma [ ] Abolo [ ] Mamu [ ]
- d. How do the Dangme call frankincense? tsupa ke e he via [ ] Ohɛ [ ]  
 Mime [ ] I don't know [ ] Mire [ ]
- e. How do the Dangme call myrrh? Mime [ ] Mire [ ] tsopa ke e he via [ ]  
 I don't know [ ] Ohɛ
17. How do the Dangme originally call God? *Laosiada* [ ] *Nyingmo* [ ]  
*Mawu* [ ] *Yawɛ* [ ] *Yehowa* [ ]

Thank you

Questionnaire administered by: Tetteh Fiorgbor (Rev.) Student, MPhil Religious Studies

Supervisor: Rev. Jonathan E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor







16. Signature.....

Thank you

Questionnaire administered by: Tetteh Fiorgbor (Rev.) Student, MPhil Religious Studies Supervisor:  
Rev. Jonathan E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor



## APPENDIX IV

## DANGME COMMUNITIES FROM WHICH DATA WAS TAKEN

No.	Communities	Frequency	%
1	Ada	3	0.57
2	Ada Foah	10	1.90
3	Adensu	5	0.95
4	Agbedrafor	1	0.19
5	Agormanya Ablotsi	20	3.80
6	Agormeda	13	2.47
7	Agortor	1	0.19
8	Ahwiam	1	0.19
9	Akuse	12	2.28
10	Asesewa	9	1.71
11	Asutsuare	9	1.71
12	Atua	9	1.71
13	Ayetepa	1	0.19
14	Ayiesu	6	1.14
15	Ayikuma	7	1.33
16	Big Ada	40	7.60
17	Brepaw Kpeti	6	1.14
18	Odumase Junction	4	0.76
19	Somanya Djaba Rd	3	0.57
20	Dodowa	26	4.94
21	Dodowa Salem	10	1.90
22	Doryumu	7	1.33
23	Kabu	1	0.19
24	Kasseh	47	8.93
25	Kodjonya	9	1.71
26	Kongo	2	0.38
27	Kordiabe	11	2.09
28	Korletsom	9	1.71
29	Kpone Bawaleshi	18	3.42
30	Kpong	1	0.19
31	Lekpongunor	6	1.14
31	Lotsubuer	1	0.19
33	Natriku	8	1.52
34	New Ningo	32	6.08
35	Nuaso	4	0.76
36	Odumase-Krobo	62	11.78
37	Old Ningo	12	2.28
38	Osubeng	6	1.14
39	Osuwen	9	1.71
40	Oterkpolu	1	0.19
41	Somanya-Plau	1	0.19
42	Prampram	22	4.18
43	Odumase-Saisi	1	0.19



44	Ada-Sege	2	0.38
45	Sekesua	4	0.76
46	Somanya	28	5.32
47	Somanya-Sra	23	4.37